



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

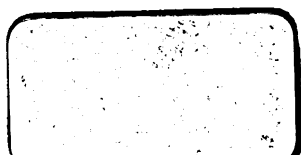
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a letter or document. The text is written on a piece of paper with a faint grid pattern. The handwriting is dense and fills most of the page. There are some markings in the top right corner that appear to be a date or reference number, possibly "1871". The bottom left corner has a small, dark, rectangular mark, possibly a stamp or a piece of tape. The overall appearance is that of an old, handwritten document.





Uterque sexus et omnis aetas habet in hoc sanctorum
hominum imitationis exemplum.—ST. AUG.

ANGLIA SANCTA

• OR

SHORT HOMILIES

FOR THE

Black Letter Days of the Church of England

BY

JAMES EDMONDSON, D.D.

PRIEST OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

London

G. J. PALMER, 32, LITTLE QUEEN STREET

• LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS

MDCCCLXXIX

138. 1. 18'

Cambridge :
PRINTED BY J. PALMER, JESUS LANE.

TO MY
MOTHER-IN-LAW, MRS. BACKHOUSE

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE
IN MEMORY OF MANY FAVOURS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY
THE AUTHOR.

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS.

A.	Apostle.
AB.	Abbot.
ABP.	Archbishop.
B.	Bishop.
B. V.	Blessed Virgin.
Circ.	Circiter, about.
C.	Confessor.
D.	Doctor.
DE.	Deacon.
E.	Evangelist.
K.	King.
M.	Martyr.
PR.	Priest.
ST.	Saint.
V.	Virgin.



THE CALENDAR.

DECEMBER.

6	Nicholas, B. C. ...	...	342 ...	Double.
8	Conception of B. V. Mary	...	...	Doub. ii class.
13	Lucy, V. M. ...	...	304 ...	Double.
29	Thomas, Abp. M. ...	...	1170 ...	Semi-double.
31	Sylvester, B. ...	...	335 ...	Double.

JANUARY.

8	Lucian, Pr. M. ...	...	...	...
13	Hilary, B. C. ...	...	366 or 8	Semi-double.
18	Prisca, V. M. ...	...	Circ. 270	...
20	Fabian, B. M. ...	...	250 ...	Double.
21	Agnes, V. M. ...	...	304 or 5	Double.
22	Vincent, De. M. ...	...	304 ...	Semi-double.

FEBRUARY.

3	Blasius, B. M. ...	...	316	...
5	Agatha, V. M. ...	...	251 ...	Double.
14	Valentine, Pr. M. ..	...	280	...

MARCH.

1	David, Abp.	544	
2	Chad, B.	672	
7	Perpetua, M.	203	
12	Gregory, B. C. D.	604 ...	Double.
17	Patrick, B.	464 ...	Semi-double.
18	Edward, K.	979	
19	Joseph, Spouse of B. V. Mary ... ..	... ..	Doub. ii class.
21	Benedict, Ab.	543 ...	Double.

APRIL.

3	Richard, B.	1253	
4	Ambrose, B. D.	397 ...	Double.
19	Alphege, Abp. M.	1012	
23	George, M.	303 ...	Semi-double.

MAY.

3	Invention of the Cross... ..	326 ...	Doub. ii class.
6	St. John Evang. ante Port. Latin	95 ...	Major double.
19	Dunstan, Abp.	988	
26	Augustine, Abp.	604	
27	Bede, Pr.	735	

JUNE.

1	Nicomedes, Pr. M.	90	
5	Boniface, B. M.	755 ...	Semi-double.
17*	Alban, M.	303	
20	Trans. of Edward, K.	1001	

* A printer's error in the Book of Common Prayer for the 22nd. The mistake has never been corrected.

The Calendar.

ix

JULY.

2	Visitation B. V. Mary ...	...	...	Major double.
4	Trans. of Martin, B. C...	473		
7	Trans. of Thomas, Abp.	1220		
15	Trans. of Swithin, B. ...	971		
20	Margaret, V. M...	278		
22	Mary Magdalene ...	...	...	Double.
26	Anne ... ..	...	...	Major double.

AUGUST.

1	Lammas Day ... ..	...	...	Major double.
6	Transfig. of our Lord ...	32		Major double.
7	Name of Jesus ... ..	...	...	Doub. ii class.
10	Laurence, De. M. ...	258	...	Doub. ii class.
15	Assumption B. V. Mary	...	...	Doub. i class.
28	Augustine, B. C. D. ...	430	...	Double.
29	Behead. of St. John Bapt.	...	...	Major double.

SEPTEMBER.

1	Giles, Ab. C.	725		
7	Enurchus, B.	340 circ.		
8	Nativity of B. V. Mary...	...	...	Doub. ii class.
14	Holy Cross Day	629	..	Major double.
17	Lambert, B. M....	709		
26	Cyprian, Abp. M. ...	258	...	Semi-double.
30	Jerome, Pr. C. D. ..	420	...	Double.

OCTOBER.

1	Trans. Remigius, Abp. C.	1049*		
6	Faith, V. M.	270 circ.		
9	Denys, B. M.	272	...	Semi-double.
13	Trans. of Edward, K. C.	1163	...	Semi-double.
17	Trans. of Ethelreda, V.	695†	...	Semi-double.
25	Crispin, M.	287		

* Died Jan. 13th, 533.

† Died June 23rd, 679.

NOVEMBER.

2	All Souls	...	...	...	Double.
6	Leonard, Ab. C.	...	599		
11	Martin, B. C.	...	397*	...	Double.
13	Britius, B.	...	444		
15	Machutus, B.	...	564 or 5		
17	Hugh, B.	...	1200		
20	Edmund, K. M.	...	870		
22	Cecilia, V. M.	...	230	...	Double.
23	Clement, B. M....	...	100	...	Double.
25	Catharine, V. M.	...	307	...	Double.

* Nov. 11th is probably the date of his funeral at Tours. St. Martin died Nov. 8th ; his relics were translated July 4th, *q.v.*





NOTICE TO THE READER.



It is suggested by the author that this work should form the basis of short homilies to the people, on the days when the following festivals occur, and in Churches where the daily prayers of the Church are said.

Six days are herein commemorated which are not found in the present Prayer Book. They are :

St. Thomas, Abp. M.	...	...	Dec. 29th.
St. Patrick, B. C.	...	...	March 17th.
St. Joseph	...	...	March 19th.
Translation of St. Thomas, Abp.	July 7th.		
The Assumption of our Lady...	Aug. 15th.		
All Souls' Day	...	...	Nov. 2nd.

They are added for the reader to use according to his own inclination or pleasure.

years, beginning with the promulgation of the Law of Moses, and ending with the Birth of the Saviour, which witnessed something of a renewal of God's favour to mankind. This period is denoted by Advent and Christmas-tide: and the Spring-tide of the natural year reminds us of it year by year.

The first of these two periods of the world has been called "the time of our wandering from God;" the second is "the time of our renewal."

At last, after these periods, so fraught with mighty interests for mankind, came the happy time "when the fulness of the time was come," and "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."¹ This period is in the Church's year Easter-tide, enduring till Pentecost; and the division of natural time called "the Summer season" annually recalls the period of the blessings which followed the Incarnation of the Son of God. This period is called "the season of our reconciliation."

Then follows "the time of our pilgrimage" here on earth, denoted by Trinity season, and typified

¹ Gal. iv. 4, 5.

by the Autumn ; when the grace of God that has been sown in our hearts, brings forth its fruit in good works unto eternal life.

We would follow this division of the ages that are past. Consider the Advent of the Saviour and the need of His appearing.

Man had fallen. He was sunk in moral death : his eyes were closed so that he could not see : his ears were dull of hearing : his heart was darkened. "Professing themselves wise," says the Apostle, "they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things."¹

In idolatry they gave themselves up to "unclean-ness, through the lusts of their own hearts," "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for evermore. Amen."

Man had need to pray, but knew not how : "Open thou mine eyes : that I may see the wondrous things of thy law." The Old Law had been given, commanding and enforcing what it was powerless to

¹ Rom. i. 22, 23.

fulfil, enforcing penalties on disobedience, but doing nothing to make obedience possible. Man's need of the Saviour was great: for he had nothing, and wanted everything. The Church every year, in the time of her Renewal—Advent—expresses the need of humanity.

DECEMBER 16TH.

The Fall, depriving man of God's grace, had left him ignorant of God's will. There was need therefore of the eternal wisdom of God. The Church therefore cries:

“O Wisdom, which didst come forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from the one end of all things to the other, and ordering them with sweetness and might: Come, that Thou mayest teach us the way of understanding.”

But besides instruction, man required redeeming. He was sold in slavery to sin. Hence the cry:

“O Lord of lords, and Leader of the house of Israel, who didst appear unto Moses in a flame of fire in the bush, and gavest Thy Law in Sinai: Come, that Thou mayest redeem us with Thy stretched out arm.”

But he was yet in captivity and sought to be made free. Hence the Church sings :

“O Root of Jesse, which standest for an ensign of the people, before whom kings shall shut their mouths and to whom the Gentiles shall seek : Come, that Thou mayest deliver us ; tarry not, we beseech Thee.”

Man was not yet loosed from the bands of sin, the fetters of the prison-house. Hence his next cry :

“O Key of David and Sceptre of the house of Israel ; Thou who openest and no man shutteth, who shuttest and no man openeth : Come, that Thou mayest bring forth from the prison-house him that is bound, sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death.”

Long buried in the darkness of the prison-house, his eyes, long unaccustomed to the light, could not see. So he cries :

“O Dawning Brightness of the Everlasting Light and Sun of Righteousness : Come, that Thou mayest enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.”

At last made free, with sight restored, the penalty due to sin must be removed, man must be saved. He cries for salvation :

“O King and Desire of all nations, the Cornerstone uniting all in one : Come, that Thou mayest save man, whom Thou hast formed out of the ground by Thy hand.”

The Jews also, formerly God’s chosen people, who rejected Messiah when He came, need our prayer :

“O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the expectation and the Saviour of the Gentiles : Come, that Thou mayest save us, O Lord our God.”¹

These were man’s prayers for ages, until holy Simeon, taking the Incarnate One in his arms, begged that he might “depart in peace ;” for his eyes had seen God’s salvation.

Since the days of the earthly life of the Saviour there have lived Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, Doctors, Confessors, Saints and holy Virgins. Mary, the blessed Mother, stands alone for ever “blessed among women.” And from above, Michael the Archangel, leader of the army of the heavenly host, witnesses the raging of the battle which he began in heaven, against the serried ranks of the Evil One.

Our path lies chiefly amongst the lesser Saints—

¹ The Church’s Antiphons, “The Seven O’s,” beginning with Dec. 16th.

men like ourselves—who waged a mighty warfare ; and who either died in martyrdom, suffered in confessorship, or spent heroic lives in the service of God. Beginning then with the *Tempus Renovationis* or Advent season, we proceed in order through the Calendar.







ANGLIA SANCTA.



NICOLAS, B.C.

Dec. 6th.

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.—
HEB. xiii. 8.

NICOLAS, the first Saint in our Calendar, was Bishop of Myra in Lycia of Asia Minor. His name is derived from two Greek words signifying *victory* and *people*; as if his life taught people how to gain the victory over their sins.

He was a citizen of Patara in Asia Minor, descended from rich and noble parents, whose names were Epiphanes and Joanna. He is related to have disposed of his property during early manhood for the benefit of the three daughters of a nobleman who had fallen into poverty. It is certain, however, that he devoted himself to God's service at an early period of his life; and that he was made Abbot of the monastery of Holy Sion, near Myra, by the Archbishop who had founded that place. Here he became

I

Hom. I.

celebrated for his piety, zeal, and charities : and lived in great seclusion until he was called upon to fill the vacant see of Myra.

Some historians relate that he was imprisoned at Myra for the faith of Christ ; and that he witnessed a good confession under the persecution of Diocletian. Be this as it may, he died A.D. 342, at Myra ; and was buried in his Cathedral. His body was translated May 9th, A.D. 1087, to Bari, on the coast of the Adriatic, by some merchants of that town, and deposited by the Bishop of the diocese in the Church of St. Stephen there. Hence the Saint has often been known as St. Nicolas of Bari.

He is thus commemorated in the Martyrology :

“ At Myra, the metropolis of Lycia, the birthday of St. Nicolas, Bishop and Confessor, of whom, amongst other miracles, this memorable one is recorded, that being far distant, he dissuaded by admonitions and threats the Emperor Constantine in a vision, from putting to death certain persons who called upon him for succour in their necessity.”

St. Nicolas is a popular saint in all seaport towns in England and abroad ; he is the patron of Russia, Venice and Bari ; also of children, poor maidens, sailors and merchants. He is usually represented as a Bishop with three golden balls in his hand, probably in allusion to his defence of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. He is also occasionally represented before a font, with hand raised in blessing three little boys with clasped hands, while a demon appears in the

background. This, again, is probably a representation of the grace given us in Holy Baptism, wherein God makes us His children by adoption and grace. While many miracles are related of him, as they are also of other saints, we may reflect that his whole life, dedicated to God, was spent for Him who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." On Him, as on a sure foundation, St. Nicolas, like the rest of God's saints, built the sure edifice of his soul's life, which will endure to all eternity. Notwithstanding the ages that are past, his name has reached us in our far-off island, associated with all that is of the love of God and man, of help in distress and sympathy in misfortune.

May we follow the example of his faith in Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," for His Name's sake. Amen.





CONCEPTION B. V. MARY.

Dec. 8th.

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before
his works of old.—PROV. viii. 22.

IN this Advent season we begin to have a glimmering of the approach of the Incarnate Son of God, whose advent had been long expected and desired. Prophecies, types, revelations and foreshadowings of the Coming One had been long given; age after age had passed away and still no signs appeared of the Deliverer of the chosen people. The hatred between the seed of the Woman and the seed of the Serpent had continued for generation after generation. The people of Israel—that nation which Abraham saw in prophetic reality as the possessors of Canaan—had long been the inhabitants of the Land of Promise, had been in captivity in Babylon and again restored to their adopted home. The nation was now in subjection to a Pro-consul, who exacted his yearly tribute for the Caesars. The people had begun to hope for a temporal deliverer who would rescue them from their bondage. But their real deliverer was to be no temporal one, rescuing them from

captivity and tribute. That day was now gone. Their darkness, wanderings, captivities and bondage were not material—those of the nation; they were moral and spiritual, extending to the depths of their very souls, in the corruptions of the nation's ways.

The Conception of Mary was like the dawning of the early day, breaking stillly upon the slumberer, in the midst of the blackest darkness of the long-drawn night. It was like the first genial blowing of the spring-tide wind, when men feel the approach of warmth after the fogs and mists of dreary winter. In the time of renovation, woman—the first to fall—was the first to rise, a second mother of the human race. We may adopt the metaphor of the wise man, and say of Mary, that she was among the daughters of Eve, “as the lily among thorns.”¹ She was as “a garden enclosed”² which the Serpent could not enter, “a spring shut up, a fountain sealed,” which Satan could not defile. Like the throne and tabernacle of Solomon and the ark of the Testament, she contained all that there was of the New Law which claims our highest love and deepest reverence. Jesus, the Saviour, called her not a servant in whom He gloried, she was more. She could say with Isaiah, “The Lord hath called me from the womb: from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.”³

Even the most holy of God's saints have been compelled to say, we “were by nature the children of wrath even as others:”⁴ for all mankind from the fall, for now four thousand years, had been plunged

in the deepest darkness and gloom. All alike had been compelled to say with David, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."⁶ But Mary was especially pure. The wise man's words may be again quoted when he asks, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"⁶

The daughter of Joachim and St. Anne was in her Conception specially favoured;⁷ marked out as the mother of the Eternal; and as that pure being whose virtues and excellencies pointed out as the one whom God had chosen to be the means whereby the Son of God overcame the world.

The festival of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been observed from very ancient times in eastern Christendom; but its observance in the west is of later institution. Some authors have supposed, though incorrectly, that the festival was instituted in England by St. Anselm, A.D. 1150. The city of Naples was the first city in Europe to observe the day; this it began to do about the ninth century. It is, however, certain that the day was ordered to be observed throughout Christendom by Pope Sixtus IV., A.D. 1483.

We may, without controversy, praise God on this day for the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose birth was the means under God of bringing brightness into our poor world, through the infinite merits of the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We would sing with the Church, "This is the

Conception of the glorious Virgin Mary, of the seed of Abraham, sprung from the tribe of Judah, illustrious of the house of David, whose life by its brightness illustrates all Churches."

The Church of England honours the Conception of Mary, as she does also her Nativity⁸ and the day of her visit to Elizabeth.⁹ Even her mother St. Anne is not passed over, being commemorated on July 26th.

In short, by appointing these three minor festivals in her honour, and the two greater ones of the Purification, and Lady Day¹⁰ or the festival of her Annunciation, our Church shews that she at least is far from shewing that disregard, not to say contempt, which much of our popular teaching has contrived to fasten upon her holy name.

She would rather lead us to think of the graces and virtues with which the holy Virgin must have been filled, so that she was worthy to be the temple of the Incarnate God. The Collect for our Lord's Nativity teaches us that the only begotten Son of God, in taking man's nature upon Him, was "born of a pure virgin." No less a being than Gabriel, the mighty spirit who stands before the throne of God, was sent to announce to her the glad tidings of the Conception of the Son; and his salutation was especially solemn, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women."¹¹ Then followed the tidings of the wonderful and miraculous Nativity, and Mary's consent to the Divine will. "And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it

unto me according to thy word.”¹² We may admire the supreme resignation to God’s will which Mary shewed in her consent to the angel’s message. We may marvel at the fact that no trace of sin can be found in her, in all the passages in which her name is mentioned. And we may notice in the tender regard which the Divine Son shewed her during his earthly life, as also in the care which He shewed her when He commended her to the care of the disciple whom He loved,¹³ how acceptable she must have been to the sinless and spotless One, of whom she was the fore-ordained mother.

From her very Conception she was marked out as the Mother of the Eternal ; the Lord possessed her in the beginning of his way, “before his works of old.”

Let us learn by the festival of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary to thank God for the Incarnation of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom we have been redeemed and brought back to God. Reverencing also the memory of His Mother, by whom He was pleased to enter the world. Remembering that, though she was a creature, she was nearer to the Eternal Son than any of us ; inasmuch as for nine months she was the very shrine of the Incarnate One ; to Whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all glory and worship, throughout the ages. Amen.

NOTES.

¹ Cant. ii. 2.

² Cant. iv. 12.

³ Is. xlix. 1.

⁴ Eph. ii. 3.

⁵ Ps. li. 5.

⁶ Cant. vi. 10.

⁷ St. Bernard (in his sermon on the antiphon *Salve Regina* IV.—Opp. par. 731) says, “Innocens fuisti ab originalibus et ab actualibus peccatis. Nemo ita praeter te. Unde auctoritas Augustini: ‘Cum de peccatis agitur, nullam de beata Maria volumus fieri mentionem. Ex eo enim majorem credimus ei collatam virtutem ad vincendum ex omni parte peccatum, quae concipere et parere meruit eum qui nullum habuit peccatum.’ (*Lib. de Natura et Gratia*, cap. 36, n. 42.) Ex omni inquit parte, hoc est, ex parte originalis, et ex parte actualis peccati. Ea ergo sola excepta, caeteri omnes quid dicere possunt, nisi quod ait Apostolus Joannes: ‘Si dixerimus quod peccatum non habemus, ipsi nos seducimus, et veritas in nobis non est?’ (1 John i. 8.) Ego quoque pia fide opinor, in utero matris tuae ab originalibus te absolutam peccatis: nec vana est fides, nec opinio falsa.”

St. Anselm, as is well known from a passage in the *Cur Deus Homo* ii. 16, was of a different opinion. He flourished from A.D. 1033—1109. St. Bernard was later: circ. A.D. 1140. The Immaculate Conception became a standing point of contention between the Scotists and the Thomists: Duns Scotus, A.D. 1307, maintaining the new doctrine, in which he was followed by the Franciscans. After the council of Basle, A.D. 1439, it became a condition insisted on by the University of Paris, with which persons had to comply who required the highest honours in theology. The Council of Trent left the question open. On Dec. 8, A.D. 1854, Pope Pius IX. promulgated the bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, by which this doctrine was made matter of faith

in the words, "Auctoritate Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, beatorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli, ac Nostra, declaramus, pronuntiamus, ac definimus, doctrinam, quae tenet Beatissimam Virginem Mariam in primo instanti suae conceptionis fuisse singulari Omnipotentis Dei gratia et privilegio, intuitu meritorum Jesu Christi, Salvatoris humani generis, ab omni originalis culpae labe praeservatam immunem, esse a Deo revelatam, atque idcirco ab omnibus fidelibus firmiter constanterque credendam."

The festival in the English Church is wholly distinct from the doctrine which has, since its institution, been grafted upon it; and St. Augustine remarks happily on the blessed Virgin, "Beatior ergo Maria percipiendo fidem Christi, quam concipiendo carnem Christi." (*De Sanct. Virgin.* i. 3.) These wise words are well in accordance with St. Matth. xii. 46, to end.

⁸ Sept. 8th.

⁹ July 2nd.

¹⁰ Feb. 2nd and March 25th; the latter being called in her honour *Lady Day*, or "The Annunciation of our Lady."

¹¹ St. Luke i. 28.

¹² St. Luke i. 38.

¹³ St. John xix. 27.





LUCY, V.M.

Dec. 13th.

A burning and a shining light.—ST. JOHN v. 35.



ST. LUCY, the great light and ornament of the Church in Sicily, was the daughter of a noble and wealthy family in Syracuse. Though her father died in her infancy, she was brought up by her mother Eutychia in the faith of Christ; and under the influence of early impressions dedicated herself wholly to Jesus Christ. Accordingly when she was asked in marriage by a young pagan nobleman of Syracuse, she sought occasion to avoid his importunities, though he was favoured in his object by her mother.

Eutychia, shortly afterwards being afflicted with a grievous malady, was induced to visit Catania, where the relics of St. Agatha were deposited: and God was pleased to hear her prayers by restoring her to health. It was then that St. Lucy told her mother of her vow of perpetual celibacy; and out of gratitude for her recovery, she entered into her daughter's wish.

The young nobleman, however, on coming to hear

Hom. III.

of this by the sale of her jewels and goods, and their distribution amongst the poor, in his rage denounced her to Paschasius, the governor, as a Christian, while the persecution of Diocletian was raging.

Called upon to deny the faith of Christ, she refused, and was exposed to infamy ; but triumphing over her persecutors, Paschasius gave orders for her to be tortured by fire.

This trial she underwent with marvellous patience, her body being torn with red-hot pincers. Committed to prison she soon died, A.D. 304.

She is generally represented with a palm-branch in one hand, and in the other a lighted lamp, expressive of her name, which means "light." Her humble, patient, and shining example needs more imitators amongst us. The love of Christ was the secret of that pure love which virgins like St. Lucy bore in their hearts. Nothing could tear them from Him in whom they found their rest and joy. Rather than desert Him, even tender virgins like St. Lucy and young boys like St. Pancras, chose trials, tortures, insults and death. Now they are rewarded with their crown of joy and gladness which can never be taken from them. In Him they rest ; for to Him they gave themselves during their lives, and in death He did not desert them.

Let us beseech God that we may imitate the virtues of His saints, for Jesu's sake. Amen.



THOMAS, ABP., M.

Dec. 29th.

We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour : How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints !—WISDOM v. 4, 5.

THIS great Saint and champion of the Church of England was born in London on the 21st of December, A.D. 1117. He was the son of Gilbert Becket, a gentleman of London ; who during a pilgrimage which he made to Jerusalem, fell into the hands of the Saracens. Escaping from captivity, his father married the daughter of his captor, a young lady who was baptized by the name of Maud, and married to him at St. Paul's Church, London, by the Bishop of the diocese. His father, dying A.D. 1138, left St. Thomas-a-Becket in a monastery of Canons regular, by whom he was educated until he reached the age of twenty-one. At that time he lost his mother ; but resolved to continue his studies, which he did at Oxford and Paris.

By means of an intimacy which had existed between Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, and St. Thomas's father, the Saint was readily induced to

Hom. IV.

accept of some post in the Archbishop's gift ; and receiving holy orders, was preferred to the cure of the church at Shoreham, and afterwards to that of Bratfield. After a short absence in Italy he was preferred to the provostship of Beverley, and to canonries at Lincoln and St. Paul's, London. He was then made Archdeacon of Canterbury by the Archbishop ; and entrusted with many weighty offices and messages ; insomuch that he was advanced to the dignity of Lord Chancellor of England, A.D. 1157.

On the death of Theobald, in 1160, St. Thomas-a-Becket, much against his will, was elected to the see of Canterbury, and consecrated, A.D. 1162 ; soon afterwards receiving his pall from Pope Alexander III.

Here by his modesty, humility, and piety, St. Thomas won the affection and esteem of the English people ; assisted at the council of Tours A.D. 1163 ; and reformed many abuses connected with the appointments made to sees and benefices.

But incurring the displeasure of the King, Henry II., by the same firm policy which St. Anselm before him had pursued, his goods were confiscated October 8th, A.D. 1164 ; and in self-defence he was obliged to leave the kingdom for the Cistercian abbey at Pontigny. St. Thomas was, however, comforted in his exile by the support of the Pope, through whose influence he was entertained at Sens by the King of France, and transferred to the monastery of St. Columba near that city. After ineffectual efforts at conciliation between King Henry and the Archbishop, the Saint, finding

that his Cathedral and revenues were being plundered, resolved to return to England, though with every expectation of losing his life at the King's hands.

He preached at Paris on his way home ; and writing the King a letter full of charity and resignation to God's will, landed at Sandwich in Kent, and was received with great joy among the people. The King, however, knew no clemency, and is reported to have said that "he cursed all whom he had honoured with his friendship and bounty, seeing that none of them had the courage to rid him of a Bishop who caused him more trouble than all the rest of his subjects." Forthwith four of his courtiers conspired to assassinate the Saint.

St. Thomas-a-Becket on his return was received in London with great triumph ; and answering the young King's order to keep himself within the city of Canterbury, by saying that he intended visiting his diocese, he preached on Christmas-day his last sermon, from the words, "And peace to men of goodwill on earth." He concluded by saying that he should shortly leave them, and that the time of his death was near.

The sainted Archbishop was not mistaken. The four assassins who had conspired his death landed in England, took with them a body of armed men to Canterbury, where they threatened him with death, unless he absolved from the Church's censures all who had been bound by them. The Archbishop could only reply that they should make satisfaction for their crimes before it could be done. He refused to flee

or to allow the Cathedral to be barricaded, saying that the church was not to be made a citadel.

The murderers then entered armed with their swords, crying out, "Where is the traitor?" No one replying, another cried, "Where is the Archbishop?" The Saint advanced towards them, saying, "Here I am, the Archbishop, but no traitor." All the ecclesiastics present then ran to hide themselves, except three who remained by him. Then one of the murderers exclaimed, "Now you must die." He only answered that he was ready to die for God, for justice and for the liberty of the Church; "he had defended the Church as far as he was able during his life when he saw her oppressed; he would be happy if his death restored her peace." He commended his soul and the cause of his Church to God, to His Saints, and especially to the martyrs St. Dionysius and St. Alphege of Canterbury. He would not stir from the church; they might murder him where he stood. Sir William Tracy, one of the conspirators, then aimed with his sword at the Saint's head; but the blow was warded off by an ecclesiastic named Edward Grim, who afterwards wrote his life. Two others then smote him violently and stunned him, so that he fell on the pavement near the altar of St. Benedict, on the left side of the nave. The holy Archbishop was fast expiring, when one cut off the crown of his head, and another savagely rent out his brains.

Not content with murder and sacrilege, they then rifled the Archbishop's palace.

Thus was St. Thomas of Canterbury martyred, on December 29th, A.D. 1170, in the fifty-third year of his age, and the ninth of his episcopacy.

The Canons of the Cathedral shut the doors, watched by the corpse all night, and privately buried it in the morning. Three years afterwards he was enrolled by Pope Alexander III. amongst the Saints.

The murderers were excommunicated. King Henry professed himself innocent of the crime, abolished the abuses which had excited the sainted Archbishop's zeal, and restored the Church property which he had usurped. His professions of penitence, however, did not save him from the afflictions which befel him and his family. Like David, the royal penitent, he lived to know that there is a God, before Whom even kings have to cast their earthly crowns. The four guilty authors of the Saint's death, distracted with remorse and shunned by all men, went into the west of England, where no one would wait upon them or hold converse with them. Enjoined as a penance to go to Jerusalem, they died there; and outside the city was placed this epitaph: "Here lie the wretches who martyred Blessed Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury."

St. Thomas is thus commemorated in the Martyrology: "At Canterbury, in England, the birthday of St. Thomas, Bishop and Martyr, who, by reason of the defence of justice, and the liberty of the Church, by the faction of impious men, being struck by a sword in his own Cathedral, went to heaven."

Whose holy example may we all follow. Amen.



SYLVESTER, B.

Dec. 31st.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.—
ST. JOHN i. 14.



FITTING text for the Saint to whom this day is dedicated. Amidst all change in the world the Person of Jesus Christ is the same: He is the brightness¹ of His Father's glory, true God and true Man, and the express image of His Father's Person, in whom the Church, as on 'a solid foundation, places her hope.

It was the truth of the union of the divine and human natures in our Lord's one Person, that St. Sylvester was called upon to uphold during his pontificate at Rome.

A native of Rome, his father's name was Rufinus, and his mother's Justina. The latter was a virtuous and pious woman of whom little is known, except that she devoted herself to her son's education.

Ordained priest by Marcellinus, Bishop of Rome, about A.D. 286, he became remarkable for his zeal

¹ Heb. i. 3.

and piety. He escaped the persecutions of Diocletian and Maximian, and on the death of Melchiades, Bishop of Rome, was elected to succeed him.

During his pontificate were held the Councils of Arles, in which the Donatist heresy was condemned, and the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, at both of which Sylvester was represented by deputy. He filled the see for twenty-one years and eleven months, and died December 31st, A.D. 335. He was buried on the Salarian way, in the cemetery of Priscilla.

St. Sylvester is thus commemorated in the Martyrology :

“ At Rome, the feast-day of St. Sylvester, Pope, who baptized the Emperor Constantine the Great, and confirmed the Council of Nice, and having most holily performed many other things, died in peace.”

By the constancy and firmness of holy men like St. Sylvester, the Catholic faith has, under God, been preserved to us entire. No one but the diligent student of Church history can believe with what obstinacy the great Enemy of souls has attempted to pollute the faith of Christ with heresy ; and to ruin eternally, by the assaults of Error, the souls which Christ came to save. We may thank God for giving St. Sylvester to the Church every time that we recite the Nicene creed. It was at the Council of Nice that St. Athanasius, then a Deacon, was present, and manfully defended the truth of God against the blasphemies of the arch-heretic Arius. When Holy Scripture tells us how the “ Word was made Flesh,” we may thank God that the

Church also has sealed the truth with her own words ; and that she has taught us that the same Word who was made Flesh is “of one Substance” with the Father ; who, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, is blessed and praised for ever and ever. Amen.





LUCIAN, PR., M.

Jan. 8th.

Be glad, O ye righteous, and rejoice in the Lord : and be joyful,
all ye that are true of heart.—Ps. xxxii. 12.

QUR words to you about St. Lucian must be few, for there is little known of him. It is probable that he was a noble of Rome and one of the companions of St. Denys of France. He preached the Gospel in Gaul with such success that he has received the title of the “Apostle of Beauvais.” At this latter place he suffered martyrdom under Julian, in the third century ; and an abbey containing his relics was founded there in the eighth century. He is usually described as a priest, though some chronicles of late date style him “Bishop” of Beauvais.

We must remark of St. Lucian, as we shall have to do of other Saints in the calendar, that his testimony for Jesus Christ was sealed with his own blood. How often has the preaching of the Cross of Christ seemed to men to be naught but foolishness ? But oftentimes the malice of mankind, leading them to lay violent hands on the children of God, seems to work out God’s plans for the redemption of His people. This was the case with St. Lucian. He was a martyr to

Hom. VI.

the cause he proclaimed. But his martyrdom was more eloquent and fruitful than any sermon: his death was more full of fruit than his life.

The notice of him in the Martyrology is brief. It is as follows :

“At Beauvais in France, of the holy martyrs Lucian, priest, Maximian and Julian, of which the two last were by the persecutors killed with the sword: but blessed Lucian, who came with St. Denys into France, after a great slaughter of his companions, not fearing with a stout voice still to confess the name of Christ, at last received the same sentence of death with the former.”

In Christian art he is represented as holding his head in his hands, severed from his body.

There was however another Lucian, of Antioch, born at Samosata in Syria, and whose day is kept in the western Church on the seventh of this month. This Saint must by no means be confounded with the former.

The latter, St. Lucian of Antioch, was left an orphan in his early years, ordained priest, and laboured diligently with St. Jerome to produce a correct version of the Holy Scriptures. During the persecution of Maximian he was tortured by being placed in the stocks and racked. He lingered for fourteen days. This was the Saint who celebrated the Holy Eucharist with his own breast for an altar, as he lay on the floor of his prison cell. With the words, “I am a Christian,” still on his lips, St. Lucian of Antioch calmly expired.



HILARY, B.C.

Jan. 13th.

I am that I AM.—EXOD. iii. 14.

THE doctrine of the unity and self-existence of the Godhead was the one point emphatically insisted on by the prophets and teachers of the Old Testament, and the one which distinguished the revelation of the true God from the imaginations of the heathen.

Revealed to Moses at the burning bush, it was confirmed by a command, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."¹

It was the discovery of this truth that first took possession of the mind of St. Hilary, and caused him to turn away from the absurdities of polytheism to serve the living and true God. He continued his researches from the Old Testament into the New; and learnt from the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, that the Divine Word, the Son of God, is co-eternal and of one essence with the Father. Thus though

Hom. VII.

brought up in heathenism, he learnt the Christian faith and received Holy Baptism.

St. Hilary was born in Poitiers in Gaul, where his family was illustrious, and was educated for pleading at the bar. He was married before his conversion to the faith, and had a daughter named Afra, who was yet living when St. Hilary was elected to the see of Poitiers, A.D. 353.

Advanced from the ranks of a laic to the Bishopric, he soon became renowned as a preacher, and succeeded in attracting St. Martin to his teaching.

He lived in turbulent times.

An Arian council had been held at Milan, A.D. 355, which had condemned the orthodox teaching of St. Athanasius, and prevailed on the Emperor Constantine to banish all the orthodox Bishops.

On St. Hilary remonstrating with the Emperor, he was sent into exile in Phrygia, A.D. 356, in company with Rhodanus, Bishop of Toulouse. A cruel persecution of the orthodox clergy followed, in which priests and deacons were beaten and their churches profaned.

The exile of St. Hilary was fruitful to the Church at large; for during the leisure of the banished Saint appeared his works, *On the Trinity, against the Arians*, a most valuable treatise, in twelve books, setting forth the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation, and proving the Consubstantiality of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Then followed his work, *On Synods*, in which he shews the variations of Arianism and its defection from the truth, A.D. 358. It is ad-

dressed amongst others to the British Bishops, whom he congratulates on their stedfastness to the truth.

After an exile of four years, the Arian heretics in the east, finding that there was some chance of his coming amongst them, persuaded the Emperor to allow St. Hilary to return to his see, A.D. 360. Here he was everywhere received with great joy, and was rejoined by St. Martin, who built a monastery near him. St. Hilary then laboured successfully to remove scandals and restore peace, discipline and piety. On the death of Constantius the persecution ceased. St. Hilary died peacefully and calmly January 13th, A.D. 368, and was buried at Poitiers, where miracles are related to have occurred at his tomb.

The first legal term in England is still called after him, "Hilary Term."

St. Hilary was a man of wonderful singleness of heart and zeal for God. He is called by St. Augustine "The illustrious doctor of the Churches,"² and by St. Jerome, "a most eloquent man, and the trumpet of the Latins against the Arians."³

His works are very valuable: his comments on the Psalms are full of elegance, so also those on St. Matthew's gospel, all of which are still read.

In his great work, *On the Trinity*, he solemnly appeals to God that he held it the great work of his life to employ all his faculties to announce God to the world, and to excite all men to love Him.

The following beautiful story, concerning St. Hilary and his daughter Afra, is told by Bishop Taylor:⁴

“When St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers in France, went into the east to reprove the Arian heresy, he heard that a young noble gentleman treated with his daughter Afra for marriage. The Bishop wrote to his daughter that she should not engage her promise, nor do countenance to that request, because he had provided for her a husband fair, rich, wise, and noble, far beyond her present offer. The event of which was this: she obeyed, and when her father returned from his eastern triumph to his western charge, he prayed to God that his daughter might die quickly, and God heard his prayers, and Christ took her into his bosom, entertaining her with antepasts and caresses of holy love, till the day of the marriage-supper of the Lamb shall come.⁵ But when the Bishop’s wife observed this event, and understood of the good man her husband what was done, and why, she never let him alone till he obtained the same favour for her; and she also, at the prayers of St. Hilary, went into a more early grave and a bed of joys.”

This simple faith of St. Hilary teaches us many a fruitful lesson; and he is thus mentioned in the Martyrology:

“At Poytiers, in France, the birthday of St. Hilary, Bishop and Confessor, who for constantly defending the Catholic faith being banished four years into Phrygia, amongst other miracles raised a dead man to life; but his feast is kept the day following (*i.e.* Jan. 14th).”

To God be all glory for ever and ever. Amen.

NOTES.

¹ Exod. xx. 2, 3. See St. Hilary, *De Trin.* l. i.

² *Ad Julian. de Pelag.* l. ii. c. 28. Catholicus loquitur, insignis Ecclesiarum doctor loquitur, Hilarius loquitur.

³ *Ad Rufin.* l. ii.

⁴ *Holy Dying.* "Remedies against fear of death." Sec. vii.

⁵ Rev. xix. 7, 9.





PRISCA, V.M.

Jan. 18th.

The Lord is my strength and my song : and is become my
salvation.—Ps. cxviii. 14.

LITTLE is known of St. Prisca the Virgin, except her name. She was, however, a Roman lady, who at the age of thirteen was accused of holding the Christian faith ; and commanded by Claudius II., the Emperor, to sacrifice. On her refusing to do so, she was beaten with rods, and exposed in the amphitheatre to the attack of a lion, which, however, did her no injury, but calmly licked her feet. She was then led back to prison and beheaded, probably about A.D. 270.

She is not to be confounded with Prisca, or Priscilla, who, with her husband Aquila,¹ was the companion of St. Paul.

¹ Rom. xvi. 3—5.



FABIAN, B., M.

Jan. 20th.

God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.—
Ps. lxxiii. 25.



ST. FABIAN has little recorded of him. He came from the country to Rome during the vacancy of the see, A.D. 236. Elected to the vacant office, he governed the Church for sixteen years, during which period he sent St. Denys and his companions into Gaul to preach the Gospel. There they were all honoured with the crown of martyrdom. He was succeeded in the pontificate by Cornelius, to whom St. Cyprian wrote on his accession, eulogizing the memory of the Saint.

St. Fabian suffered martyrdom during the persecution of Decius, A.D. 250. He is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

“At Rome, the birthday of St. Fabian, Pope, who suffered martyrdom in the reign of Decius, and was buried in the churchyard of Callistus.”

We would here notice that in the accounts of the martyrs, the day on which they suffered is called their birthday—the day of their entry on the beatific vision

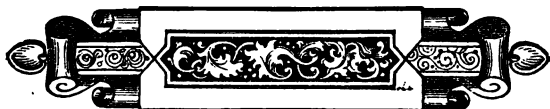
Hom. IX.

of God. This day is usually their festival, though occasionally the day of their translation is also observed.

High rank and exalted offices are often positions of peril rather than of enjoyment. This was especially the case with those holy men who immediately succeeded St. Peter and his first disciples in the pontifical chair at Rome: we often find the foremost in the Christian conflict the first to suffer under the assaults of heathen persecution. Though now persecution may not rage so furiously, yet the cares of office and the temptations of the world first overcome many a man, who has made the search after power the chief object of his existence.

“In all times of our wealth; Good Lord, deliver us.”





AGNES, V.M.

Jan. 21st.

Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.—
ST. MATTH. v. 8.



HERE is no one on earth, except the Blessed Virgin Mary, of whom the words of our text may be more truly said than of St. Agnes.

Born at Rome of noble parents, and brought up from her childhood in the fear of God, she was sought in marriage by Symphronius, the Prefect of the city.

She had, however, devoted herself to God in virginity, and refused the Prefect's offer. Delated to him as a Christian, she was commanded to sacrifice ; and refusing, every means were tried, such as promises, threats, infamy and persuasion, to move her from the faith. But these proving ineffectual, she was condemned to death.

St. Agnes went joyfully to the place of execution : and at one blow her head was severed from her body with the sword.

Her virtues and excellencies have been celebrated by poet and historian : her effigies are found on the glass vessels used by the Christians in the third cen-

Hom. X.

ture. She is usually represented with a lamb, and sometimes has in one hand a palm branch, in the other a sword. St. Augustine thus speaks of her :

“Blessed is the holy Agnes, whose Passion we this day celebrate ; for the maiden was indeed what she was called ; for in Latin, Agnes signifies a lamb, and in Greek it means pure. She was what she was called, and she was found worthy of her crown.”¹

She is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

“At Rome, the Passion of St. Agnes, Virgin, who under Symphronius, Governor of the city, was cast into the fire, but it being extinguished by the virtue of her prayers, she died by the sword, of whom St. Jerome writes thus : ‘The life of Agnes is in a special manner praised throughout all the Churches by the pens and tongues of all nations, who overcame both her age and the tyrant, and consecrated her life of chastity by martyrdom.’”

¹ Serm. cclxxiii. 6.





VINCENT, DE. M.

Jan. 22nd.

Be joyful all ye that are true of heart.—Ps. xxxii. 12.

ST. VINCENT, the most illustrious martyr of Spain, was born at Saragossa in Arragon; trained in the Christian faith by Valerius, Bishop of his native town, ordained Deacon, and sent to preach.

Under the edict of Dacian, one of the governors of Spain, he was apprehended and put into prison, A.D. 303. Valerius and St. Vincent were loaded with chains and carried to Valencia; where after threats and persuasions, the former was sent into exile and speedily finished his course by martyrdom. St. Vincent was condemned to torture. His body was stretched upon the rack and cruelly tortured with iron hooks; but he defied the patience of his tormentors, and when they began to grow tired, Dacian ordered him to be beaten.

At length Dacian himself was moved with pity, and entreated him to purchase his pardon by giving up the sacred books. Firmer than ever, St. Vincent was

then led to a more terrible torture called "the Question." It consisted of an iron frame with bars running across it like a gridiron, the bars being as sharp as scythes, and underneath a fire was kindled, making the whole red hot. On this dreadful instrument the Saint was stretched at length, and bound fast down. But the more he was tortured, the warmer grew his love for Christ: and the more he suffered, the more he seemed to rejoice.

At length, when the malice of man could do no more, he was carried back to prison and laid on the rough floor of a dark cell, his feet made fast in the stocks. In prison the jailer was converted to the faith by the martyr's constancy. On hearing of it Dacian shed tears of rage, but allowed the martyr's fellow Christians to visit him. He did not long survive: for though provided with a soft bed for his poor mangled body, he calmly went to rest, Jan. 22nd, A.D. 304. His body was cast out into the field to be the prey of beasts and dogs; it was taken out in a boat and thrown into the sea, with a mill-stone fastened to his neck. But during the night it was washed ashore, and privately buried in a humble Chapel near Valencia. After the persecution his relics were translated and buried under the altar of the Church.

He is the patron of many churches in France and Spain, and is thus commemorated in the Martyrology:

"At Valentia, in Arragon of Spain, of St. Vincent, Deacon and Martyr, who under Dacian, the most

wicked President, after he had suffered imprisonment, hunger, the torture *Equuleus*, disjoining of his members, hot fiery plates, a burning gridiron, and other torments, went triumphantly to heaven, there to receive the reward of his martyrdom: whose glorious Passion Prudentius has elegantly set down in verse, and St. Augustin and St. Leo the Pope do exceedingly commend it."

¶ We next proceed to those festivals which fall for the most part within the *Tempus Deviationis*, represented by the period from Septuagesima to Easter.





BLASIUS, B. M.

Feb. 3rd.

For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field ; and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.—JOB v. 23.



ST. BLASIUS was Bishop of Sebaste, a city of Cappadocia, in Armenia. He spent much of his time in retirement on a hill near the city ; whither he used to withdraw in solitude, after his duties were over, and commune with God. Thus as it were, the wild beasts grew accustomed to him ; and he is often represented in art as surrounded by wild beasts, or with birds bringing him food.

During the persecution of Diocletian he was taken before Agricolaus, the Governor of the province, and confessing himself a Christian, was thrown into prison.

St. Blasius was said to have been tormented with an iron comb, by which he was flayed : for this reason he is the patron of the wool-combers, who keep his day at Norwich.

He is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

“ At Sebaste in Armenia, the Passion of St. Blaise, Bishop and Martyr, who after he had wrought many miracles, under Agricolaus, President, being cruelly

whipped and hanged up by the hands, and his flesh all torn with iron combs, cast also into a loathsome prison, and plunged into a lake, out of which he came sound and whole ; by the command of the same Judge, together with two boys, was finally beheaded. But before him seven women, gathering up the drops of blood which ran down from his body whilst he was tortured, being apprehended to be Christians, after cruel torments, died by the sword."

Thanks be to God.





AGATHA, V. M.

Feb. 5th.

And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage. —
ST. MATTH. xxv. 10.

ST. AGATHA, a Sicilian Virgin, was born at Catania, and descended from a rich and illustrious family. From her earliest years, having been educated in the principles of Christianity, she had consecrated herself to God's service.

During the persecution of Decius, she was seized and brought before Quintianus, the Consular and a man of infamous life, by whom she was buffeted and cast into prison.

On being questioned as to her faith, her constancy was found to be so great as to defy all torments. She was first tortured on the rack, and endured the agony with calmness; she commended herself to God, and prayed for His assistance. St. Agatha was then tormented by having her breasts cut off, a cruel torture which she endured, and only answered by mildly reproaching the inhuman tyrant with the remembrance of his infancy, and of his own mother. She was then cast into prison again, and all food and medical aid

Hom. XIII.

denied her. Four days afterwards she was again tortured and taken back to prison, when she calmly fell asleep in Jesus, A.D. 251.

She was buried by the people with great honour, and is thus commemorated in the Martyrology :

“At Catania, in Sicily, the birthday of St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr, who in the days of Decius the Emperor, under Quinctian, Judge, after buffets and imprisonment, after the torment *Equuleus* and rackings, cutting off her breasts, and rolling up and down upon potsherds and hot coals, at last in prison, whilst she was praying to God, accomplished her martyrdom.”





VALENTINE, PR. M.

Feb. 14th.

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—ST. MATTH. v. 3.

ST. VALENTINE was a holy Priest at Rome, who with his family, assisted the martyrs under the persecution of Claudius II. Apprehended for these offices, he was led before Calpurnius, Prefect of Rome. While he was entrusted to the care of his chief officer, Valentine converted and baptized him with his family and procured them the rite of Confirmation. Led before Claudius, the following conversation occurred: "Why, Valentine, do you not enjoy our favour and worship our Gods?" To whom he answered, "If you knew the favour of God, you would renounce idols and serve Him." A bystander asked him, "What have you to say of our divinities?" Valentine answered, "I have nothing to say of them, but that they were wretched men full of impurity." Claudius answered, "If Christ is a true God, why do you not tell me what is true?" He answered, "Christ is the only God; and if you believed in Him, you would save your soul, enlarge

the state and conquer your enemies." "Do you hear," asked Claudius, "how wisely and properly the man speaks?" The Prefect answered, "The Emperor is deceived: how can we desert what we have learnt from infancy?" Claudius then consigned him to the custody of the Prefect: by a miracle he cured his jailer's daughter of blindness, and, as we said, converted him and his family.

St. Valentine was then beaten with clubs and beheaded, A.D. 280.

He is thus mentioned in the Martyrology:

"At Rome, in the way Flaminia, the birthday of blessed Valentine, Priest and Martyr, who after he had restored many sick persons to their health, and instructed the ignorant in the faith of Christ, was beaten with clubs and beheaded under Claudius, Emperor."

The English custom of sending "Valentines" on this day is supposed to be the relic of a heathen practice which has been thus modified by the teaching of Christianity. St. Francis de Sales made some such change in his diocese in the seventeenth century. The custom perpetuates the name of this holy Saint, but has nothing to do with any part of his history.

V. To God be all glory, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.



DAVID, AB., *Patron of Wales.*

March 1st.

Pray without ceasing.—I THESS. v. 17.

THE life of St. David, Archbishop of Caerleon, and Patron of Wales, was an illustration of the power of prayer. A monk, living a secluded life, and enjoining the same on his disciples, his life was one of ceaseless activity and hard manual labour. Rising at early dawn at the crowing of the cock, David and his companions, in the mountain fastnesses of Wales, used to continue in their ceaseless pursuit of prayer till they went out to labour. Their raiment was the coarsest; their food the scantiest; they used no beasts of burden to draw the plough. They prayed mentally during the hours of toil, preserving silence, never speaking except when compelled to do so.

St. David was the son of Xanthus, prince of Ceredigion, or Cardiganshire. He was brought up early to serve God; and after his ordination to the priesthood, lived an ascetic life in the Isle of Wight, under the direction of the holy and learned Paulinus. He con-

Hom. XV.

tinued in solitude for a long time, preparing himself for his work among the Britons ; after which, preaching Christ crucified, he gathered a great flock of disciples.

The Pelagian heresy, breaking out a second time in Britain, was the means of bringing St. David into notice.

This heresy, which denied man's free will to serve God, suggested that His grace was unnecessary for the Christian life ; and thus denied the inherent corruption of human nature. It had been refuted and condemned ; but again reviving, it was again condemned by a synod of Welch Bishops at Brevi, A.D. 519. St. David, invited to this synod, confuted and silenced the heresy by his learning and eloquence.¹

Thereupon, Dubritius, Archbishop of Caerleon, resigned his see to him ; and St. David transferred his throne from the populous city of Caerleon to St. David's, a more retired spot, where he might serve God in quietness and solitude, as well as govern his see.

St. David remained at St. David's for many years, and died in his eighty-third year, A.D. 544.

He is described by Giraldus as the great ornament and pattern of his age : he was a man of holy life, and also of considerable learning and eloquence.² At the synods which were held to refute and condemn the Pelagian heresy, he was seen full of life and vigour, speaking with great force and energy ; and convincing his hearers by the power of his eloquence no less than by example.

St. David was buried in his own Church of St. Andrew, in the vale of Ross, and from him the whole town and diocese have received the name of St. David's.

Thus by his zeal, learning, sanctity and eloquence, he has become the Patron of the Welch people. The secret of his life lay in the power of prayer, aided by great natural gifts. Thus was he a shining light in his generation : his austere life, full of industry and toil, is an encouragement to us in our Lenten duties.

NOTES.

¹ See St. Aug. *De Peccat. Orig.* c. 11 ; *De Gest. Palaest.* 11.

² Cunctis autem pater David, tanquam in speculâ positus eminentissima, vitae speculum erat et exemplar. Instruebat subditos verbo, instruebat et exemplo, efficacissimus ore prae-dicator, sed opere major. Erat autem audientibus doctrina, religiosi forma, egentibus vita, orphanis munimen, viduis fulcimen, pupillis pater, monachis regula, saecularibus via ; omnibus omnia factus, ut omnia lucrificaret Deo. Girald. Camb. *De Vita St. Dav.* lec. ix.



CHAD, B.

March 2nd.

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.—I PETER v. 4.

ST. PETER in this chapter gives some exhortations to those whom he calls his fellow-presbyters, beseeching them to feed the flock of God ; to take the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And he promises them in return "the crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Such a one as this described was St. Chad, Bishop of Lichfield. He was eminently a man of chastity, humility and lowliness of mind. A native of Northumbria, he was educated under St. Aidan, at Lindisfarne, in the monastery of which the latter was the founder. He spent a considerable part of his life in Ireland, until he was summoned by his brother, St. Cedd, to assist in the establishment of a monastery in Yorkshire, where he presided for six years, until his appointment by King Oswi to the bishopric of the

Hom. XVI.

Northumbrian portion of the country. To this see he was consecrated, A.D. 666, by Wini, Bishop of Winchester, assisted by two British prelates.

St. Chad devoted himself laboriously to the duties of his office, continually visiting his diocese on foot, preaching everywhere, seeking out the poor and sick, in towns, villages and fields ; and imitated in all things the example of St. Aidan and his brother St. Cedd.

At the general visitation of the English Churches by Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 669, the see of York was, in consequence of an alleged irregularity in St. Chad's consecration, adjudged by him to Wilfrid. On hearing this, St. Chad made his memorable reply : " If you judge that I have not duly received episcopal consecration, I willingly resign this charge, having never thought myself worthy of it." St. Chad was, however, allowed to remain at York until he was transferred to Lichfield, A.D. 670. He governed this diocese " most gloriously," says Venerable Bede,¹ for two years and a half ; and died during a pestilence March 2nd, A.D. 672. He was buried at Lichfield, at first, near the Church of our Lady ; but afterwards a Cathedral was built and dedicated in his name. This Cathedral has lately been restored to its former beauty.

St. Chad's life was one of labour and constant watchfulness for the flock committed to his charge. He endeavoured to promote peace and the observance of discipline, his efforts being all the more successful

¹ *Eccles. Hist.* iv. 3.

by reason of his singular humility. St. Chad ruled well, and was also an example for men to follow. Obedience was readily given him, because he was in turn obedient to his Master. Thus men were ruled by him, because they saw in him a servant of Christ. He was succeeded in the see by Winfrid, "a good and modest man,"² says Venerable Bede.

² *Eccles. Hist.* iv. 3.





PERPETUA, M.

March 7th.

They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword.—HEB. xi. 37.



IN the Holy Catholic Church of Christ there is opportunity for every one to glorify God. Even the Holy Innocents, murdered by King Herod, glorified God by their deaths, unconsciously undergone for the sake of Jesus.

To-day we celebrate the martyrdom of St. Perpetua, a lady, who with five companions, suffered a cruel death for the Saviour's sake. She was descended of a good family, and married to a man of good position. During the persecution of Minutius, Perpetua was twenty-one years of age and the mother of one child : her father was a heathen, and loved her more than any of his children.

Very touching is the account which she gives of her captivity and torments, illustrating the cruelty of the heathen and their hostility to the Christian name.

Every means were employed to make St. Perpetua and her companions renounce the Christian faith. Persuasions, instruments, threats and force were alike

Hom. XVII.

employed ; but all proved ineffectual, and served only to convince others of the verity of the faith, which could enable its professors to suffer so much. St. Perpetua and her companions were kept for some days under guard before their committal to prison. Then, as they were found inflexible, began their tortures. She describes how when they were in the hands of the persecutors, her father, out of the affection which he bore her, made fresh efforts to shake her resolution. She said to him, "Can that vessel, which you see, change its name?" On his replying that it could not, she said, "Nor can I call myself other than I am, a Christian." Then her father in his rage fell upon her and beat her, but was obliged to go away in confusion.

St. Perpetua then received Holy Baptism, and a few days after she was put into prison, where she and her companions were appalled with the darkness and horror of the place, the heat and the ill-treatment which they received from the soldiers. They remained in prison for some days, during which St. Perpetua was comforted by some heavenly visions.

She dreamt that a ladder was set up to heaven, to the sides of which were fastened sharp instruments of iron, so that any one ascending would be in danger of being wounded. Besides, at the bottom lay a large dragon ready to devour her. But saying that in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ she ascended without fear, the dragon gently lifted up his head, and stepping upon the monster's head, she mounted upwards, and was received into the arms of the good Shepherd.

After a few days St. Perpetua and her companions were summoned before Hilarion, the Procurator of the province. Here, not even the threats of the Judge or the entreaties of her parents could restrain her from boldly confessing Christ Jesus.

On her persisting that she was a Christian, she was led back to prison with her companions, and condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts in the arena. Accordingly on the day of her martyrdom she was led out of prison with her companions into the amphitheatre. Her friend Satyrus was the first to fall under the attack of a leopard: next St. Perpetua was tossed by a bull, and fell heavily on her back to the earth. Felicitas shared the same fate. These two holy women were then ordered to be dispatched with the sword. Perpetua however seemed to have just recovered from an ecstasy, and asked when she was to fight the wild cow? Learning from the bystanders what had happened, she encouraged her friends to continue in the faith, to preserve their love for one another, and not to be alarmed by their sufferings.

At length, after many blows had been inflicted on her by her unskilful executioner, she calmly expired in the arena with Felicitas, March 7th, A.D. 203.

The bodies of St. Perpetua and St. Felicitas were preserved in a church at Carthage.

On reading of the martyrdom of these holy people, we cannot fail to be struck with their admirable courage and constancy, and the example which they have left us of patient endurance unto the end.

Nothing was able to conquer the constancy and courage of this holy Saint Perpetua. Not even the threats of her enemies, her natural modesty and timidity, her womanly tenderness, or the terrible circumstances of her violent death could avail to make her deny her Lord. All was powerless to extinguish the divine flame of heavenly love which burned in that bosom. All was powerless to arrest the preaching of that Cross which was so firmly planted in the world, or to cast a shadow on the holiness of the Christian name.

St. Perpetua wrote the acts of her own martyrdom until the evening before her triumph.

She is thus described in the Martyrology :

“ At Tuburbum in Mauritania, the birthday of the holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas, the last of whom (as St. Augustine records) being great with child, and her execution, according to the laws, deferred until she was delivered ; whilst she was in travail she grieved, being cast unto the wild beasts she rejoiced. There suffered also with them Revocatus, Saturninus, and Secundulus, of which the last died in prison, but the two others, under Severus the Emperor, were cast unto the beasts.”

Thanks be to God.



GREGORY, B. C. D.

March 12th.

One that ruleth well his own house.—1 TIM. iii. 4.

ST. PAUL in this Epistle enumerates the virtues required in a bishop of the Church. He says, "A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous: one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?); not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

St. Gregory the Great was conspicuous for these apostolic virtues. He was born at Rome, A.D. 540, of noble and wealthy parents; his father, Gordianus,

Hom. XVIII.

being a Senator, who after St. Gregory's birth renounced this pursuit, and became one of the seven Cardinal Deacons who took care of the ecclesiastical districts of Rome. His mother, Silvia, also consecrated herself to God.

Gregory, whose name means "Watchman," applied himself in his youth to the study of grammar, rhetoric and philosophy, and afterwards of canon and civil law. At the age of thirty-four he was made Prætor of Rome by the Emperor Justin the Younger, becoming thus an official of much importance in the city. He was glad, however, to forsake this office for the service of God; inasmuch as at his father's death he built and endowed six monasteries in Sicily, and founded a seventh in his own house at Rome. The latter became the famous monastery of St. Andrew on the Coelian hill, whither St. Gregory himself retired, A.D. 575.

It was during his retirement in this monastery that he formed his project for the conversion of England.

Passing one day through the market-place, A.D. 577, he saw some youths of fine features and fair complexions exposed for sale; and finding on enquiry that they came from Britain, and that the people there were heathen, he heaved a deep sigh; and said that it was lamentable that the prince of darkness should be master of so much comeliness, and that so fair an exterior should be unadorned by God's grace. He applied therefore to Pope Benedict I., requesting that some persons might be sent to preach the faith in

that country ; and not finding any one disposed to go and undertake the mission, he offered himself for the work. With the Pope's leave he set forth on his journey with several monks of his own monastery ; but their departure becoming known, the whole city was in an uproar, and his immediate return was demanded. Shortly afterwards returning to Rome, he was made one of the seven Cardinal Deacons, and sent as Papal Nuncio to the Emperor Tiberius at Constantinople. There at the request of St. Leander, Bishop of Seville, whom he met there, he wrote his thirty-five *Morals on the Book of Job*, in which he reduced into one body the excellent principles of that work.

St. Gregory was recalled to Rome, A.D. 584, and returned to the solitude of his monastery. On the death of Pope Pelagius II. (Jan., A.D. 590), St. Gregory was chosen Bishop by the unanimous suffrages of the clergy, senate and people ; and the appointment being ratified by the Emperor, he was consecrated Sept. 3rd, A.D. 590.

During the interval between the death of Pelagius II. and his consecration, the plague, which had carried off so many people, continued to rage with great violence. Insomuch that St. Gregory took occasion to exhort the people to repentance. After preaching to them, he appointed a solemn litany, or procession, in seven companies, each headed by a priest, who were to march from different churches in the city to that of St. Mary Major. During this procession there died eighty of the people who assisted in it. But St.

Gregory did not cease until the distemper had disappeared. This was the origin of greater litanies and processions.

St. Gregory the Great made his public profession of faith at the Confession, or Tomb of St. Peter ; and governed the Church for over thirteen years.

Amidst the labours of this position he did not cease in his anxiety for the conversion of Britain. In July, A.D. 596, he sent St. Augustine and forty companions on that holy mission to which we in England are so deeply indebted.¹ For although we have the evidence of St. Alban's martyrdom to shew that Christianity had existed in this isle before his mission, the cruel sword of the persecution had done evil work in obliterating the name of Jesus from our shores.

During his pontificate St. Gregory was unceasingly occupied in preserving order and discipline ; he reformed the Church's office books from the Sacramentaries and office books of Gelasius ; improved the music of the Church, especially the plain song, which has since been known by his name ; wrote many works ; distributed relief to the poor ; subverted heresies ; and built up the Church. His own household was a model of perfection. The heresies of Eutychius, Nestorius, Arius, and Donatus he repressed, and extirpated idolatry wherever he could.

St. Gregory the Great died on March 12th, A.D. 604, and was buried in the basilica of St. Peter.

The Council of Cloveshoe, held under Archbishop

¹ See May 26th.

Cuthbert, A.D. 747, commanded his feast to be observed throughout all the monasteries ; and the Council of Oxford, A.D. 1222, entrusted it to the whole kingdom.

St. Gregory is described as tall of stature, and of dignified bearing, with a sweet and noble face, long beard, black curled hair ; he is represented as a Pope, with a book in his hand and a dove on his shoulder.

The works of St. Gregory the Great were numerous and very learned.

St. Hildefondus, Archbishop of Toledo, in the seventh century says of him, "He surpassed Antony in holiness, Cyprian in eloquence, and Augustine in wisdom." Venerable Bede,¹ our countryman, says of him, "Though Gregory is not to others an Apostle, he is so to us, for the seal of his Apostleship are we in the Lord."

After his great work on morals upon the Book of Job, he wrote his treatise *On the Pastoral Care*, in which he sets forth the dangers, duties and obligations of that charge. Following St. Gregory Nazianzen, he calls it "the art of arts and science of sciences." His forty *Homilies on the Gospels* were delivered in a plain and homely style, as were also his twenty-two *Homilies on Ezekiel*, delivered during the siege of Rome by the Lombards, A.D. 592.

Yet with all his virtues, abilities, station and learning, he subscribed himself "Servant of the servants of God," a title which the Pope still makes use of.

¹ *Hist.* ii. 1.

He is thus commemorated in the Martyrology :

“ At Rome, of St. Gregory, Pope, and famous Doctor of the Church, who for his renowned acts, and for converting the English to the faith of Christ, is surnamed the Great, and called the Apostle of the English.”

V. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.





PATRICK, B. C., *Patron of Ireland.* *March 17th.*

And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me,
cannot be my disciple.—ST. LUKE xiv. 27.

ST. PATRICK, the Apostle of Ireland, was a native of Scotland, descended of good family, about the end of the fourth century.

Taken captive into Ireland in his sixteenth year, he formed his plan of converting the Irish nation to Christ, a design for which he prepared himself with much prayer and study, for some years after his return from exile. He was ordained Deacon, Priest and Bishop for this purpose, and devoted himself to this work with all the energies of his soul and body.

Passing over into Ireland, he was determined to endure all things, and be esteemed as the last; that he might convert that nation, which was altogether at that time addicted to idol-worship. He travelled over the whole country, penetrating even the thickest forests, baptizing multitudes of people, ordaining priests, consecrating holy virgins and instituting monastic orders.

He gave freely all that he had in alms to the poor

and presents to the kings ; and suffered persecutions from the tyrants who obstructed his teaching. St. Patrick fixed his see at Armagh, where he founded a monastery ; baptized the Kings of Munster and Dublin, the seven sons of the King of Connaught, with most of their subjects ; and never ceased till he had converted the whole island. He died A.D. 464, and was buried at Down in Ulster, where his body was found in the year 1185.

St. Patrick is thus commemorated :

“In Ireland, the birthday of St. Patrick, Bishop and Confessor, who first preached Christ in that nation, and was famous for extraordinary miracles and virtues.”





EDWARD, K.

March 18th.

And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts.—1 TIM. vi. 8, 9.



ON the death of King Edgar, A.D. 975, Edward, his eldest son, succeeded to the throne of England, at the age of thirteen.

This was not done without the opposition of Queen Elfrida, King Edgar's second wife, who endeavoured to obtain the crown for her son Ethelred, who was then but seven years old. She had endeavoured to shew that she had been the only legitimate consort of the late sovereign; but her claims had been subverted by the nobles of the time, and by the two Archbishops, St. Dunstan and St. Oswald. St. Edward began to reign, young in years, but fortified by the counsels of St. Dunstan. We are assured by historians that he was a prince of most excellent disposition, averse from all wantonness and carnal pleasures, desirous of serving God by purity of mind and body, and gifted with wonderful modesty, clemency and prudence. Notwithstanding the treasonable practices

Hom. XX.

of his step-mother, and the frequent proofs of her envy and jealousy, he always behaved to her with deference and respect, and treated his brother with much affection.

His admirable qualities did not, however, soften the heart of his cruel step-mother, who was constantly seeking his life.

Edward had reigned over England for three years and a half, when one day going to divert himself by hunting in a forest near Wareham, in Dorsetshire, he was induced to visit his brother at Corf Castle. While he was refreshing himself, the Queen caused him to be stabbed by one of the servants. He attempted to ride off, but fell down dead, March 18th, A.D. 979.

His body was taken up and plunged hastily into a marsh, but being discovered by a pillar of light which miraculously appeared, it was buried in the Church of our Lady at Wareham.

The wicked Elfrida's son, Ethelred, succeeded to the throne, but his reign was weak and unfortunate.

In the Martyrology there is the following notice of this excellent King :

“In Britain, St. Edward, King, who being killed by the treachery of his step-mother, was illustrated (*i.e.* made illustrious) by many miracles.”

Though only seventeen years old at the time of his death, he was looked upon as a Saint and Martyr by the people of the time. He did not suffer for the faith, or for any matter of right, but the Saxon

chronicles greatly lament his unhappy death, and say that a worse deed than his murder had never been done since the English came into Britain. His relics were translated from Wareham to Edwardstow, near Shaftesbury, on the 20th of June.

This murder warns us of the enormity of the sins of covetousness and avarice. For the sake of a throne, Elfrida was willing to commit murder. So does one sin lead on to another: and the words of the sacred writer are true, "The love of money is the root of all evil."¹

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 10.





ST. JOSEPH.

March 19th.

A just man.—ST. MATTH. i. 19.

ST. JOSEPH, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, calls for some mention, not only on account of his position as the protector of our Lady, but also by reason of his humility and virtue.

His life has never been completely written, and is only known in full to Him whose servant he was. He was descended from Abraham the patriarch, through the line of the kings, David and Solomon, and was thus of the royal tribe of Judah. He was espoused, but never married to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and entrusted by God's providence with the education of the Son of God-made-Man.

For some time St. Joseph appears to have been ignorant of the nature of the mysterious Incarnation; and it was therefore a matter of much concern to him when he first discovered this profound mystery.

We read in the Holy Gospel: "When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they

came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. . . . Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: and knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name Jesus."¹

Then followed the visit and adoration of the Magi. "And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."²

We next hear of St. Joseph in connection with the flight into Egypt.

After the departure of the Magi from Herod's presence, "The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I

called my son.”³ (Hos. xi. 1.) . . . “But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child’s life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.”

The infant Jesus was presented by St. Joseph and Mary in the Temple; and every year at the feast of the Passover the visit was repeated. When the holy child was twelve years old, there occurred the well-known losing Him in the Temple, and their finding Him “in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.” St. Joseph was present, and assisted in the search.

Then followed that wondrous life at Nazareth, in the humble shop of the carpenter.

It was even made a matter of reproach to the Saviour in the course of His ministry that St. Joseph was content with his humble employment at Nazareth. We read, “And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, inso-much that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James,⁴ and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man these things? And they were offended in him.”⁵ But Jesus, who “took upon him the form of a servant,” was content

to go down with them ; "and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them."⁶ Thus sharing human poverty and labour, "it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."⁷

After this, we find no mention of St. Joseph. He was not present at the marriage feast of Cana, though "the mother of Jesus was there ; and both Jesus was called and his disciples to the marriage." We can only conclude that the foster-father of Jesus and defender of Mary had fulfilled his part in the providence of God, and that his last hours were soothed by the care of Jesus and Mary his mother. His tenderness and devotion to Mary's wants, his care for her, from the midnight search through the inhospitable streets of Bethlehem, all through the flight into Egypt, and up to the hour of his departure, have made him known as "the guardian of the Holy Infancy."

"Meek and gentle," says one,⁸ "blameless and loving, as St. Joseph was, it is not possible to think of him without extreme awe, because of that shadow of identity with the Eternal Father which belongs to him, and hides him from our sight, even while it presents him to our faith. We cannot describe his holiness, because we have no term of comparison. It was not only higher in degree than that of the saints, it was also different in kind. But it was eminently

hidden with God. His was an unearthly life. His very place in the world was but a seeming place. He was an apparition in the world, an apparition of the Unbegotten and Everlasting."

Of the holy family at Nazareth we may say: "Those Three! they were three kingdoms of God, but one King; three creations, and the Creator one of those creations; three, yet as it were but one, one with an amazing unity, a unity which made them one, yet left them three, the earth by Trinity."

The festival of St. Joseph is celebrated in the East on the 20th of July. It was ordered to be observed by Pope Gregory XV. in A.D. 1621, and by Pope Urban VIII. in A.D. 1642.

St. Joseph is thus commemorated in the Martyrology:

"In Jewry, the birthday of St. Joseph, spouse of the most blessed Virgin Mary." And on the next day appears: "In Jewry, of St. Joachim, father of the most blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God."

NOTES.

- ¹ St. Matth. i. 18 to end.
- ² St. Luke ii. 16.
- ³ St. Matth. ii. 13 to end.
- ⁴ Of those "brethren," see St. Matth. xxvii. 56. They were the sons of the Mary there mentioned.
- ⁵ St. Matth. xiii. 54—57.
- ⁶ St. Luke ii. 51.
- ⁷ Heb. ii. 17, 18.
- ⁸ Faber, *Bethlehem*, "The Midnight Cave."





BENEDICT, AB.

March 21st.

The Patriarch of the Western Monks.

Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.—

HEB. xii. 14.

IN considering the life of St. Benedict, Abbot, who is known by the name of “the Patriarch of the Western Monks,” we must realize that men and women may feel themselves called to very different states of life ; so that while one may feel that he or she is serving God better in the ordinary bustle and duties of the world at large, others find their vocation in solitude, apart from their fellow-men.

This principle (which is more often acted upon than we think for) is one which is recognised by the Apostle St. Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. Unlike St. Peter, the writer of this Epistle was unmarried, and even, in the chapter referred to, desirous that others should remain in the same condition. “For I would,” he says, “that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, and another after that.”¹ And again, “I would have you without carefulness. He

Hom. XXII.

was in secular learning, never advanced to the priesthood, remaining throughout life a Deacon, "learnedly ignorant and wisely untaught,"⁴ he was enabled by the Holy Spirit to be the guide of countless souls to Christian perfection, preaching in places round his monastery, and with a bountiful hand distributing all his goods to the needy, that he might lay up treasure for himself in heaven. St. Benedict called his Order "a school in which men learn how to serve God": his own life was a model for his disciples' imitation, as well as the carrying out of his rule. He is said to have foretold the day of his death, which took place six days after his prediction. He accordingly ordered a grave to be opened; and received the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. Then giving his last instructions to his followers, with hands lifted up in prayer, he calmly expired in the sixty-third year of his age, A.D. 543.

St. Gregory, speaking of St. Benedict, expresses in two words the great characteristic virtue of this glorious patriarch of the Western monks. He says of him, *habitavit secum*, "he dwelt alone," a rare perfection, in which the very essence of solitary retirement consists. It is in this solitude that the soul collects all its faculties, and employs all its powers in God's service. St. Benedict dwelt with himself, always exercised in the presence of God, examining himself, watching over his heart, and contemplating divine things. What powers of concentration of mind, and what discipline of the soul this life requires! How

holy is the ideal which he sets before us and his disciples! And how great must have been the holiness and self-recollection of this noble saint! For forty-eight years he thus served God, and left to posterity a name for sanctity such as rarely to be excelled.

The leading principles of the Benedictine Order were the practice of solitude, prayer, humility and obedience, perfect charity or love of God being the great recompense of true humility. His twelve degrees of humility, as they are called, inculcate deep compunction of heart, fear of God and constant care to walk as in His presence. Perfect renunciation of one's own will, ready obedience to the Superior, and patience under all injuries are required as parts of his system. The disciples must show even their thoughts and designs to their Superior, be content in all humiliations, love simplicity and poverty, esteem others better than themselves, avoid all singularity in word and deed, love silence, avoid mirth, be modest and humble in all things. The Abbot is charged with the entire government of the community. The time of the members of the Order was so arranged as to admit of manual labour, sacred studies, prayer, pious reading, and meditation. St. Benedict commended in his followers entire abstinence from wine, but in practice this advice was much departed from.

Doubtless many have embraced the monastic rule who have never fully possessed the secret of living by themselves. Though removed from the society of

mankind, their thoughts have wandered over surrounding objects away from God, and the mastery over the inner faculties of the soul has thus not been gained. But of the service which the Benedictine rule has been to mankind generally, as well as to many who have embraced it, there can be but little doubt. During periods of lethargy, sloth or corruptions of manners, the monasteries have preserved the light of religion. During periods of intellectual darkness, their libraries have preserved knowledge and learning, and the Benedictine rule above the rest has been of practical utility to mankind, by reason of the injunction of manual labour by St. Benedict upon his disciples. Many a county has been tilled by the monks, many a land reclaimed from barbarism by them, and many a work of learning, both sacred and secular, has been preserved from utter loss by their means. Besides this, the life of watching, discipline, order and obedience inculcated by monastic rule cannot fail, when carried out, to impress mankind with the dignity of the yoke of Christ, as well as to remind men continually to seek that holiness, without which we are assured we cannot "see God."

He is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

"At Mount Cassin, the birthday of St. Benet, Abbot, who restored monastical discipline in the West, almost decayed, and wonderfully propagated the same : whose life, renowned for sanctity and miracles, St. Gregory, Pope, has written."

¶ We now begin to treat of the third part of the year, viz., the minor festivals which occur within the *Tempus Reconciliationis*, or the time denoted by the period lasting from Easter to Pentecost.

Easter will however occasionally occur as late as April 25th, in which case the four next festivals occur in the second division.

NOTES.

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 7.

² 1 Cor. vii. 32.

³ A.D. 529.

⁴ *Scienter nesciens, et sapienter indoctus.*—*Gregory the Great.*





RICHARD, B.

April 3rd.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.—PROV. iii. 13, 14.

RICHARD, Bishop of Chichester, was born at the manor of Wiche, about four miles from Worcester, and from his earliest years devoted himself to the acquisition of real learning and piety. He was eminently a man of labour; so much so, that he devoted himself in early years to repairing the unfortunate condition into which his eldest brother's affairs had during Richard's early years been brought. It is even stated that our Saint became his brother's servant, and took upon himself the management of his farms, which by care and diligence he raised to prosperity.

Next after studying at Paris and Oxford, where he had led a most careful and exemplary life, he proceeded to his degree and went to Italy, where he became Professor of canon law, a study which here in

England, to our very great loss, has been allowed to fall much into decline.

After teaching for a short time at Bologna, he returned to Oxford and was made Chancellor of the University, a post from which he was soon promoted by St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, who made him his Chancellor, and intrusted with the chief management of his see. Here Richard, with the example of this holy Archbishop before him, made good use of his revenues in relieving the wants of the poor and looking out the sick and destitute, after relieving their wants at a common table.

His period of office was not always a quiet one. Power is often a trust which is exercised with more of care than of enjoyment ; and this was in some way the case with Richard.

St. Edmund had exerted himself very much for the reformation of abuses and the promotion of discipline in the Church, but his efforts were thwarted by King Henry III., who secretly appropriated the revenues of the Church for his own use. To avoid even the appearance of connivance with such abuses as these, St. Edmund sought voluntary banishment in France, and with Richard his Chancellor retired into a Cistercian monastery at Pontigny, which had before been the refuge of Stephen Langton in the reign of King John.

Our Saint did not relax his labours after the death of his patron, for he improved himself in theological studies, received the order of priesthood, returned to

England and served a cure in the diocese of Canterbury. Here he was again appointed to his former office of Chancellor by St. Boniface, successor of St. Edmund, and compelled to take care of his diocese for him. So great was his reputation for wisdom, learning and sanctity : so great honours were heaped upon him.

The see of Chichester becoming vacant in the year 1244 an unworthy appointment was made by King Henry III., only to be declared void by the Archbishop and Prelates of the Church. Richard was accordingly presented and consecrated in the following year to the see. The avaricious monarch, however, seized on his revenues, and for two years Richard suffered many hardships and ignominies. He did not cease, notwithstanding this, to visit the sick, bury the dead, and relieve the poor of his diocese, perpetually preaching the word of God with much power and success. At length, after nine years of labour in the episcopal office, he was seized with a fever while preaching and administering confirmation ; and foretelling his death, prepared himself for it with prayer and thanksgiving.

Richard died at Dover, at a hospital called "God's House" which stood near the present town hall and gaol. The part of Dover known at the present day as *Maison Dieu* perpetuates the memory of the spot where this wise and holy man calmly expired. His death took place on the 3rd of April, A.D. 1253, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. His body was buried

at Chichester, before an altar which he had erected in memory of St. Edmund, his patron.

Richard, Bishop of Chichester, was a man of singularly benevolent disposition, eager in the pursuit of knowledge, and practical in his method of action. His character appears more strongly when contrasted with that of his elder brother. Richard by his wisdom and prudence recovered the patrimony which his brother had lost; and not only so, but laid up for himself a store of learning which he improved to so good purpose during his lifetime. Notwithstanding the troubles of the times he lived in, we have seen him promoted step by step to honour and power, condescending when called upon to undergo humiliation and fatigue, and rising again afterwards to renewed exertion and fresh labours. His lot was not one of wealth, but he obtained wisdom and knowledge. His wish was rather to be liberal to others than to lay up for himself: to provide for the destitute and afflicted rather than to lay up earthly silver and gold. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold."¹

The antiphon for to-day contains these words from St. Matthew: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

¹ Text.

He is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

“ In England, of St. Richard, Bishop of Chichester, renowned for holiness and miracles.”

This festival is in point of date the latest in the English Calendar.





AMBROSE, B. D.

April 4th.

A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God.—

TITUS i. 7.

AMONGST the necessary qualities required in Christians, and chiefly in Priests and Bishops, is a thorough determination, courage and constancy in resisting evil. Of this virtue it is believed that St. Ambrose is the most conspicuous example that the Church has seen since the days of the Apostles. While the servant of God is found full of gentleness, meekness and humility, so as readily to yield to others in matters indifferent, in those of duty he is inflexible, possessed of unyielding firmness together with modesty and fear. Duty often compels an earnest Christian to resist, even at the cost of much personal suffering and loss. In such cases the path of suffering must be cheerfully taken and followed to the last.

St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, was born A.D. 340, his father being Prætor of a great part of Gaul and Britain. It is related that while he lay asleep as a child in one of the courts of his father's palace a

swarm of bees flew about his cradle, and that some crept in and out of his mouth ; then they mounted up into the air and vanished out of sight. This was considered a presage of future eloquence and greatness. The Saint was brought up at Rome and Milan, made governor of Liguria and Aemilia, and at the death of Auxentius, Arian Bishop of Milan, elected Bishop by popular acclamation. After due preparation therefore he was baptized, and received episcopal consecration on the 7th of December, A.D. 374, in the thirty-fourth year of his age.

After his elevation to this dignity he devoted himself entirely to the study of the Scriptures, ecclesiastical writers and Fathers ; gave over to the Church all his lands, estates and property, and proceeded to rid the Church at Milan of heresy to so wonderful an extent that in ten years' time there hardly remained a soul affected by it. The Arian heresy was at this period making sad havoc of the Church ; and at Milan it had been fostered by the efforts of Auxentius, the predecessor of St. Ambrose in the see, as well as by the secret influence of the Empress Justina. This heresy denied the Divinity of the Son of God, teaching the fatal error that Jesus, though more than a man, was not truly God, "of one Substance with the Father ;" but that so far from being the Eternal Son of God was He, that there was a time when He did not exist. This error St. Ambrose, in common with all the Doctors of the Church, vigorously opposed, as he did also the heresy of Apollinaris.

It was the firm opposition which St. Ambrose gave to these heresies that gained for him the title and reputation which he has gained in the Church.

The death of Valentinian I. and of Gratian afforded the Empress Justina an opportunity of espousing the Arian cause. Accordingly, close on Easter, 385, she sent some Ministers of State to St. Ambrose to demand St. Victor's Church in Milan for the use of her sect. On the Saint's answer being reported that he could never surrender a temple of God, she sent again, asking for another. The Bishop, however, proved inflexible. Officers were then sent to seize St. Victor's, but the attempt failing by the commotion which it excited, St. Ambrose was again summoned to surrender it. He only replied that he could not; that the Emperor was welcome to take all he had, even his liberty or his life, but that he could not surrender the temple of God. A troop of soldiers was then sent to seize the other Church in Milan, but on the soldiers being threatened with excommunication, they desisted, and worshipped in the Church. On the following day the Emperor withdrew the soldiers, and desisted from his design, upon which there was joy and thanksgiving among the Catholics.

The Empress, however, was still more exasperated by the failure of her plan, and induced the Emperor to make a law authorising the meetings of the Arians, and punishing with death any one who should oppose their assemblies.¹ She then sent, in the following

¹ This was promulgated 23rd January, A.D. 386.

Lent, to demand St. Victor's, and was again refused. St. Ambrose moreover returned to the Emperor the following noble reply: "Who can deny that in matters of faith the Bishops judge Christian Emperors? So far are they from being judged by them, if a conference is to be held about the faith, it belongs to the Bishops to hold it, as was done under Constantine, who left them the liberty of being judges." St. Ambrose was no Erastian. After sending his remonstrance to the Emperor signed by his hand, he retired to his Church, guarded by the faithful, who stood night and day within the doors. Soon the Church was surrounded by soldiers, who allowed no one to come out. The Saint was thus a prisoner in his own Church, and often preached to his people therein. One of his sermons, preached at this time, is still extant. It is on the subject of "not delivering up the Churches," and is full of comfort for his people. He was not going to quit them, though he had no defence but entreaties and tears. When he had been asked to deliver up the vessels belonging to the Church, he had answered that if they had asked him for his land, silver, gold, or even his life and liberty, they might have it. He expected to be executed either by the sword or by fire. Still he feared not, and he would not leave his Church. He rejoiced that he rendered to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, and to God the things that were God's; but the tribute was Cæsar's, the Church was God's. Nothing was more honourable to the Emperor than

that he should be the son of the Church ; he was in the Church, not above it. In the Church, however, St. Ambrose remained for some days ; then the guards were quietly removed, and the Saint returned home.

St. Ambrose was the first to establish in Milan the system of singing the Psalms antiphonally. It was a custom which he had learnt from the Eastern Church, and one which rapidly spread from Milan to all the Churches in the West. To encourage and comfort his people during the persecutions of the Arians he composed hymns and anthems for their use. Many of the Church's Office hymns are his, as, for instance, the evening hymn, "O Trinity, most Blessed Light," and the well-known hymn for Apostles' Days, "The eternal gifts of Christ the King," and many others, in which he taught the Church's true doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Unity.

The uncompromising character of the Saint was shewn also on another occasion, besides that of his refusal to surrender the Church at Milan.

It appears that the Emperor Theodosius, upon the occasion of a sedition in Thessalonica, had given instructions for a general massacre of the inhabitants, a commission which was carried out by the soldiery under circumstances of great barbarity. For about three hours a massacre of seven thousand persons was going on as the people came out of the circus, the soldiers surrounding them and rushing in upon them. St. Ambrose, however, wrote to the Emperor, expostulating with him and exhorting him to repentance,

refusing at the same time to admit him to Communion till he had done so. On the Emperor coming to Church as usual, St. Ambrose went to meet him, and forbade him further entrance, telling him at the same time that he had need of repentance for his late anger, and that he was unworthy to lift up his hands in prayer when they were still stained with the blood of innocent citizens.

Theodosius was compelled to submit to the Church's penance, and spent eight months in mourning and retirement in his palace.

After this, on his earnest supplication, he was allowed to make public confession of his sin, kneeling at the Church door in the rank of the penitents, repeating the words of David, "My soul cleaveth to the dust; O quicken thou me according to thy word." Before absolution was given him he was ordered to draw up a law cancelling all hasty decrees which he had made, and commanding a respite of thirty days before execution of any warrants affecting life or property.

One of the last public acts of this great Saint and Doctor was the consecration of St. Honoratus, Bishop of Vercelli.

Shortly after this St. Ambrose was seized with illness, and foretold that he would not live after Easter. Before his death he pursued his usual studies, continuing his commentary on the forty-fourth Psalm.¹ When he arrived at the last verse but one the com-

¹ E. V.

mentary ceased, and to this day remains incomplete.¹ The newly consecrated Honoratus was present at his departure, giving him the holy Viaticum, which he had no sooner received than he departed. He died at midnight before Holy Saturday, A.D. 397, being about fifty-seven years old, and about twenty-two years Bishop. In the English Calendar we keep the day of his death; but in the Eastern and Western Churches he is honoured on the 7th of December, the day of his consecration to the see of Milan.

The works of St. Ambrose are very numerous, and fill many volumes. They treat of almost every branch of sacred literature, but chiefly of the theological controversies of the times in which he lived. He was a most strenuous defender of the faith against the Arians, as well as the author of some very elegant treatises on Virginity, in which he shews that retirement, silence, humility and prayer are the chief duties of a Christian virgin. At the request of the Emperor Gratian, he wrote the work *On the Faith*, or *On the Trinity*. To refute the Novatian heresy, he wrote his two books *On Penance*, in which he shews the need of true repentance, together with the Church's absolution and real amendment of life. He exhorts Christians to frequent Communion; and in his work *On the Mysteries* instructs the newly baptized as to Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. He teaches the Church's doctrine of the

¹ See *Enarratio in Ps.* 43, *sec.* 96, and compare with the Psalm.

Real Presence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament ; and in his three works *On the Offices of the Ministers* he issues many valuable precepts with relation to the manners of the clergy. His works, however, are very numerous, and time would fail to describe them all adequately. Sufficient for us to observe that his life was one of singular sanctity ; that he applied himself resolutely and boldly to the duties of the see of Milan ; that he possessed a wonderful generosity and inflexibility where the law of God was concerned, combined with great charity and sweetness of character. Thus he gained the hearts of every one ; and even when severe he was charitable in his very sternness. St. Augustine the Great tells us that when he first saw him, enslaved though he then was to the world, he was won by his sweetness, because he saw in him a kind face and benevolent heart. "I saw a man affectionate and kind to me," he said. Such were the virtues of St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church. O that his example were often amongst us ; that his virtues were often found, and his teaching more followed in the Church.

Here is his notice in the Martyrology :

"At Milan, the deposition of St. Ambrose, Bishop and Confessor, by whose endeavours, amongst other monuments of his learning and miracles, all Italy almost was consecrated to the Catholic faith, in the time of the Arian heresy."



ALPHEGE, ABP. M.

April 19th.

If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.—I PETER iv. 16.

ST. ALPHEGE was born about A.D. 954, of good and noble parents, and was well educated in the learning of his time. Being afraid of the snares of wealth, he gave up the world while very young; and though dutiful to his parents, overcame the wishes of his mother, and became a monk in Gloucestershire. Here he served God for some years in solitude, till he left for a cell which he made for himself in a desert part of Bath Abbey, where he shut himself up apart from men. After a while becoming known, his advice and instruction were sought by noblemen and others, so that he was obliged to take upon himself the direction of the great Abbey at Bath. Here he suffered much from the irregular lives of some of his monks, but was able to reclaim many of them to a more severe view of their duties. At length, on the death of Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, A.D. 984, he was induced by St. Dunstan, the Primate of England, to quit his soli-

Hom. XXV.

tude and accept the vacant see. Here his virtues manifested themselves more clearly, notwithstanding the early age at which he was advanced to this dignity. His austerities and self-denial made him conspicuous, while his charity to the poor was so remarkable that during his time it was said that there were no beggars in the whole diocese.

For twenty-two years he ruled the diocese of Winchester, and at the death of Archbishop Alfric, A.D. 1006, Alphege was translated to the see at the age of fifty-two.

After his return from Rome with the archiepiscopal pall, he did much for the restoration of discipline, reformation of abuses, and the observance of abstinence on Fridays.

The kingdom, however, was not allowed to remain in peace. At this period the Danes were making great havoc in the country by frequent incursions, plundering the country and committing barbarities on the people. King Ethelred offered little or no opposition to them. They had now invaded Kent and laid siege to Canterbury. Perceiving the danger the city was in, the English chiefs endeavoured to persuade the Archbishop to provide for his safety by fleeing from the city. St. Alphege, however, refused, telling them that it was the part of a hireling to flee from the flock in time of danger. During the siege he sent envoys to the Danes to ask them to spare the people, and endeavoured to animate and encourage his flock.

While he was thus employed, Canterbury was taken by storm, and a general massacre of the inhabitants ensued. St. Alphege ran out of the city into the midst of the turmoil, and besought them to turn their anger against him.

He was accordingly seized, made to witness the burning of the Cathedral and the slaughter of his monks; he was beaten, kicked, loaded with irons, and confined in prison for several months. At the end of that time, there being no ransom to redeem him, he was again bound, brought before the commander of their fleet at Greenwich, and threatened with torments and death unless he paid the sum they asked for. On his answering that he had nothing to give them, except the true wisdom which consists in the knowledge of God, they were infuriated, knocked him down with their battle-axes and stoned him. Like St. Stephen, he prayed for his murderers with his latest breath. Hereupon a Dane, whom he had only lately baptized, mercifully put an end to his tortures by cleaving his head asunder with his axe; and thus completed his martyrdom in the fifty-ninth year of his age, A.D. 1012. St. Alphege was an example of one who suffered as a Christian; he glorified God not only in his death, but in his life. It was enough for him that the disciple should be as his Master and the servant as his Lord. For Him he lived and for Him he died, as on this day.

The Collect for his festival in the ancient office-books has this prayer :

“O God, who crownedst the blessed Alphege, Archbishop of Canterbury, with the glory of martyrdom ; grant unto his successors and the Church under their guidance, still to glorify Thee : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”





GEORGE, M.

April 23rd.

Quit you like men, be strong.—1 COR. xvi. 13.

ST. GEORGE, the soldier-martyr, is honoured as one of the most illustrious of the noble army of martyrs, insomuch that many Churches throughout Christendom are called by his name, and he has been long known amongst the Greeks as “the great martyr.”

He was born in Cappadocia, of noble parents, who were also Christians. On the death of his father he lived with his mother on their estate in Palestine, and being sound and robust of body, he engaged himself in the profession of a soldier. Diocletian was Emperor of the Roman Empire at this period, and his name has become associated with one of the most terrible persecutions that has ever vexed the Church of God. Notwithstanding the offers of preferment in the army which the Saint was made, he chose rather to lay aside the marks of dignity, gave up his commission and position, and had the boldness to expostulate with Diocletian on his edicts and severities against the Christians.

Hom. XXVI.

St. George was accordingly apprehended on Good Friday, thrown into prison and tortured for eight days, to shake his constancy. But all efforts to make him renounce Christ were ineffectual, and he was beheaded on the 23rd of April, A.D. 303.

He is believed to have been the same young man who tore down an edict of the Emperor's against Christianity from the walls of Nicomedia. Whether or no this be the case, it is certain that the circumstances of the apprehension of the man who did so coincide very much with those of St. George. His body was taken from Nicomedia to Joppa, in Palestine.

St. George has been chosen as the patron Saint of several nations besides our own, and also as the patron of military men. This is owing in part to the fact of his having been a soldier, and in part to the belief that he once appeared to the Crusaders before the battle of Antioch, encouraging them and promising them victory.

The Festival of St. George should teach us the real nobility of the profession of arms. It is stated that the Church's Martyrologies contain the names of more soldiers than they do of men of any other profession. The reason is plain. Every Christian should be a martyr in will, even if he is not called upon to be one in deed; he should be ready to endure all things for the sake of Christ. The soldier's life is one of the same kind; it requires endurance as well as courage and a truly noble heart. It is therefore not

surprising that the example of St. George was frequently followed in the days of an Empire, whose power depended on force of arms, and whose army contained many Christians.

Every true Christian is also a soldier, even if he have no worse enemy to conquer than himself. We nowhere find a better and more earnest Christian than Cornelius, the Centurion. He was, as a Jewish proselyte, "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."¹ And after he was taught to fear God and not to despise the Gentiles, we read that "the Holy Ghost fell on all" of his company "which heard the word," and they were all baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.² Decisive action, energy and promptitude are natural qualities which must always be found in the soldier. It is well when we find also the true Christian fortitude of St. George, the steadfast determination to be on the side of right, to fight manfully in the Christian cause and to remain steadfast unto the end.

St. George is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

"The birthday of St. George, martyr, whose glorious martyrdom the Church of God honours amongst the crowns of other martyrs."

¹ Acts x. 2.

² v. 44.



INVENTION OF THE CROSS.

May 3rd.

He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.—SONG OF SOLOMON ii. 4.

IN this wonderful Song of Solomon we have set before us in highly poetic language the mutual love of Christ and His Church. In this second chapter the hope and calling of the Church are vividly set before us, together with Christ's care of His Church and the expression of her faith and hope. The Church, the Bride of Christ, expresses the care of the Bridegroom for her: "He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love." Though the love of the Saviour for His Church is so great that the mutual love of husband and wife is but, as it were, a shadow of it, yet that love is one which is chiefly manifested during this life by suffering.

"In this," says St. John, "was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the pro-

pitiation for our sins.”¹ Christ’s banner over us was love. “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.”²

The cross of Jesus Christ is the measure of His love for us, because on it He laid the iniquity of us all, and offered the best that He could give for us, and that was Himself. Hence, though we obtain the benefits of the death of Christ by other means—prayer, sacraments, worship, reading of God’s Word, faith, love and obedience—the cross on which our blessed Lord’s death took place has been the subject of the Christian’s awe. With what feelings would we gaze on that awful tree whereon hung the lifeless Son of God! With what awe should we be full on reading that title which was set over His head, in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, “JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

As the Christian Church became less harassed by persecution, the pious wish became every day more intense, to find the cross on which the Saviour suffered, the spear, the nails, the sponge and the title over His head. It was the natural feeling and expression of genuine piety. Accordingly, after Constantine had resolved to build a magnificent Church in Jerusalem, his mother Helena undertook a journey thither with that object, A.D. 326, although she was at that time nearly eighty years of age. There was much difficulty in finding the spot, because the

¹ John iv. 9—10.

² John iii. 16.

heathen, out of hatred to the Christian religion, had done their best to conceal it. They had not only heaped rubbish upon the place where our Saviour was buried and built a temple to Venus on the site ; but they had erected an image of Jupiter in the place where He rose from the dead.

Helena, however, was informed that if she could only find where He had been buried, she would there find the instruments of His punishment ; it being the custom of the Jews to bury near the criminal all that belonged to his execution. She therefore ordered the profane buildings to be taken down, the images to be broken in pieces and the rubbish to be removed. After much digging they found the holy Sepulchre, three crosses, the nails, and the title which had been placed over His head. St. Helena was so overcome with joy on discovering the cross on which our Lord suffered, that she built a Church on the spot, and in it placed a large portion of the instrument of our Lord's Passion. Part of it she sent to the Emperor Constantine at Constantinople, and part she sent to Rome, where it was placed in the Church of "the Holy Cross of Jerusalem." The title which had been placed over our Lord's head was sent to the same Church. The inscription, in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, is in red letters ; but the colours are faded, and some of the letters effaced by time.

The festival of the Invention, or Discovery of the Cross, has been kept in the Western Church ever since the fifth or sixth century. The actual finding of

the cross by St. Helena took place, A.D. 326, shortly after the Council of Nice. Anciently in England the celebration of Holy Communion on this day was called, “*The Mass of the Rood.*”





ST. JOHN, EVANG. ANTE PORT. LAT.

May 6th.

And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of ; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized.—ST. MARK x. 39.

THIS was the answer which Jesus made to the two disciples James and John, the sons of Zebedee, in answer to their request that they might sit, one on His right hand and the other on His left, in His kingdom. Doubtless these two disciples had imagined a temporal kingdom in which Jesus would reign in glory, and where His disciples would be with Him. “But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask : can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of ; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized : but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give ; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.”¹ The chief place in the Kingdom of Christ is often the post of greatest suffering ; so when

they said that they were disposed to drink of the cup that He drank of, and be baptized with the baptism that He was baptized with, they were unconsciously expressing their readiness to suffer and die with Him. How this was fulfilled in the case of St. James we know, from his being put to death by King Herod. "He killed James, the brother of John, with the sword."² We learn also from to-day's festival how it was fulfilled in St. John.

St. John the Evangelist was the disciple whom Jesus loved; and we may say without exaggeration that he shared in an especial manner in the sufferings of Jesus Christ. It was he who stood by the cross of Jesus with Mary, and the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. He was commended to the Mother of Jesus, and "took her unto his own home."³ In common with the other Apostles, he was put into the common prison, scourged and forbidden to speak "in the name of the Lord Jesus."⁴ But the Saviour's prediction was to be fulfilled in a more remarkable manner.

Domitian, the last of the twelve Cæsars, was the author of the second general persecution of the Church. Surpassing Nero in cruelty, he seized St. John, the last remaining one of the Apostles, now an old man of venerable countenance, and ordered him to be thrown alive into a large cauldron of boiling oil, probably after first scourging him, as was the usual custom with Roman criminals. The holy Apostle was accordingly thrown in; God accepting his will,

but not allowing the martyrdom to be carried out in deed. For the same God who had formerly preserved the three Hebrew children in the furnace of fire, so that "the midst of the furnace" was "as it had been a moist whistling wind," rescued this His brave servant from the boiling bath, and brought him out more whole than when he was put in. Domitian, however, like Pharaoh, was only hardened in heart; but contented himself with sending the Saint into banishment to the isle of Patmos. There he remained until the following year, during which he was comforted by his wondrous vision, the Apocalypse, which forms the concluding book of the New Testament. After the assassination of Domitian, St. John returned to Ephesus in the reign of Nerva, when he found the Empire in peace. This triumph of the Apostle was wrought on the 6th of May, A.D. 95, and just outside that gate of the city of Rome, which is called the Latin gate. Hence the name of our festival, *St. John before the Latin gate.*

We may learn from this festival what place suffering occupies in the kingdom of Christ. Tribulation and suffering are often the lot of Christ's people on earth, that they may inherit glory hereafter. Often, indeed, men seek the highest places in either Church or State, only to find that they have woven for themselves a thorny crown and placed themselves on a throne of difficulties and perplexities. This baptism of St. John the Evangelist may be called "a baptism of fire;" that of St. James "a baptism of blood." The

place which St. James gained was that of martyrdom ; the place of St. John the Evangelist was one of great glory in the Church in his Confessorship. He was the Apostle of Love—that pure Love of God which leads to the perfect love of man. He was the only one of the twelve Apostles who died a natural death.

The antiphon for to-day is as follows :

“The Apostle John, being plunged into a vessel of boiling oil : by Divine mercy came forth unharmed. Alleluia.

℣. Greatly is blessed John to be had in honour.

℟. For he leant on Jesus’ bosom at the Last Supper. Alleluia.” (St. John xiii. 23.)

He is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

“At Rome, of St. John before gate called Latina, who, by the command of Domitian, brought prisoner from Ephesus to Rome, and there by sentence of the Senate, before the same gate, being put into a vessel of boiling oil, came out more pure and vigorous than he went in.”

NOTES.

¹ St. Mark x. 38—41.

² Acts xii. 2.

³ St. John xix. 27.

⁴ Acts v. 18 to end.

⁵ Song of the Three Children, v. 27.



DUNSTAN, ABP.

May 19th.

But the righteous live for evermore ; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High.—
WISDOM OF SOLOMON v. 15.

DUNSTAN, Archbishop of Canterbury, was born at Glastonbury in Somersetshire, A.D. 924, of good and noble parents ; was instructed by the monks of Glastonbury, and, through the recommendation of Aldhelm, Archbishop of Canterbury, called to the Court of King Athelstan.

He enjoyed much of the favour and esteem of this monarch, until with the usual fortune of courtiers, he became an object of envy. Accordingly (having been from his youth full of modesty, humility and purity), he left the Court, and became a monk in Glastonbury, with a view of serving that Abbey. Here he spent his time in prayer, meditation, manual labour and devotion, until he was promoted by King Edward to the dignity of Abbot. At the death of King Edred, Edmund's successor, A.D. 995, St. Dunstan was much persecuted by King Edwi, a most profligate youth. The Saint was compelled to flee the country, his

Hom. XXIX.

monks were dispersed, and all the Abbeys in England which had escaped the devastation of the Danes were ruined, with the single exceptions of Glastonbury and Abingdon. St. Dunstan was recalled A.D. 957, and promoted by King Edgar to the see of Worcester, and consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, St. Odo. He was next made Bishop of London, and A.D. 961 advanced to the metropolitan see of Canterbury. Here, with the help of St. Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, and of St. Osmund, Bishop of Worcester, he did much to reform abuses and restore discipline. He restored most of the monasteries and religious houses of England, and for twenty-seven years vigorously maintained discipline amongst clergy and laity; frequently visiting the Churches over the whole kingdom, everywhere preaching and instructing the faithful with great zeal. St. Dunstan was a man of much eloquence and power of speech, insomuch that few were able to withstand his exhortations. Yet he did not lose his love of solitude; he often retired to Glastonbury Abbey to devote himself to meditation. Amidst his care of the poor and the distractions of his office he never ceased to find time for prayer and study, so that he was enabled to concentrate the powers of his soul upon divine things.

In the sixty-fourth year of his age, while he was at Canterbury, he was taken ill; and although he was preparing himself for his last hour by greater devotion, he preached three times on Ascension Day,

exhorting his hearers. to follow Jesus in heart and mind, and begged for the prayers of the people.

He fixed the place for his burial on that same day, and on the Saturday following, the 19th of May, A.D. 988, full of zeal and love of souls, he calmly died after receiving the holy Viaticum. He was buried in his own Cathedral at Canterbury.

The life of St. Dunstan affords an opportunity for considering the protection which the Almighty exerts over those who fear him. "But the righteous live for evermore; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand; for with his right hand shall he cover them, and with his arm shall he protect them."¹

Here is the reward of the righteous man, long the subject of the jealousy of the wicked. The ungodly "made no account of his labours;" they even "accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour: now is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is amongst the Saints!" Even they have to acknowledge the error and fruitlessness of their lives. "Therefore have we erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the sun of righteousness rose not upon us. We wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction: yea, we have gone through deserts, where there lay no way: but as for

¹ Wisdom of Solomon v. 15, 16.

the way of the Lord we have not known it. What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us? All these things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by : and as a ship that passeth over the waves of the water, which when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the pathway of the keel in the waves ; or as when a bird hath flown through the air, there is no token of her way to be found, but the light air being beaten with the stroke of her wings, and parted with the violent noise and motion of them, is passed through, and therein afterwards no sign where she went is to be found ; or like as when an arrow is shot at a mark, it parteth the air, which immediately cometh together again, so that a man cannot know where it went through : even so we in like manner, as soon as we were born, began to run to our end, and had no sign of virtue to shew, but were consumed in our own wickedness. For the life of the ungodly is like dust that is blown away with the wind : like a thin froth that is driven away with the storm ; like as the smoke which is dispersed here and there with a tempest, and passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day.”¹

¹ vv. 6—15.



AUGUSTINE, ABP.

May 26th.

The Apostle of England.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.—EPH. iv. 11, 12.

TO-DAY we commemorate that great Apostle of England, through whom God was pleased to work the conversion of England to the faith of Christ.

To understand this event aright, we must consider that although England was converted to the faith of Christ either in apostolic times or shortly afterwards, yet the original inhabitants had been gradually driven out of the country to seek shelter among the mountains of Wales.¹ This was probably the beginning of the Welsh nation. Various Saxon tribes coming from Germany in the fifth century had occupied these parts, and brought with them the worship of Pagan divinities in place of that of the one true God.

It is thus with respect to the English nation that we call St. Augustine "the Apostle of England;"

¹ See Bede's *Eccles. History* i. 4: Tertullian *Adv. Judæ.* vii.

because in converting the Saxons to Christ in the sixth century, he laid the solid foundation for the work of the Church in these parts.

St. Augustine was a disciple of Pope Gregory the Great, and a monk of St. Andrew's Monastery at Rome; and it was with St. Gregory that the idea originated of evangelising this country. St. Gregory had wished to go himself, but was at last led to choose St. Augustine for the work. Accordingly, after being set apart, St. Augustine and his companions advanced on their way; but overcome with fear they wished to return home. Strengthened, however, for their work by St. Gregory's exhortations, they returned, and landed in Britain A.D. 597. They numbered about forty persons, and landing in the Isle of Thanet, were well received by King Ethelbert and his Queen, Bertha.

They came, carrying for their banner a silver cross and a figure of our blessed Lord painted on a board: they sang a Litany as they came, for their own salvation and for those to whom they came. They were provided with food and shelter at Canterbury, where the work advanced rapidly. Under the temporal protection of King Ethelbert, St. Augustine and his little band of monks soon brought their new neighbours to know of the Saviour, the Sacraments, the worship of the Church and the use of the ordinances of religion. They served God in constant prayer, watchings and fasting; they preached and lived as the servants of Christ.

St. Martin's Church, Canterbury, was given them; and there they preached, sang the Divine Offices, baptized, and celebrated Holy Communion.¹ Through their labours so many were led to seek the faith of Christ, that St. Augustine was obliged to send to Rome for help.

Accordingly, in A.D. 600, there were sent Mellitus, who became Bishop of London; Justus, the first Bishop of Rochester; Paulinus, afterwards Archbishop of York; and Rufinianus, who became the third Abbot of the Monastery at Canterbury. The pallium—a most honourable distinction—was sent from Rome as an acknowledgment of the Saint's labours, together with a number of sacred vestments, vessels and books. Thus through St. Augustine did our English Church receive her succession of Bishops, her sacred orders and her ministry; and thus in the sixth century was the line of that ministry established which has survived the storms of ages.

For some years St. Augustine continued the work, visiting on foot the different parts of our island; and provided for the carrying on of his work after his decease. In A.D. 604 he ordained the Bishops of London and Rochester; also Laurence, his successor at Canterbury. On the 26th of May, A.D. 608, he died, and was buried in the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Canterbury.

Such was the holy, peaceful life of this blessed man, to whom we owe so much; and by whom, under

¹ Bede's *Eccles. History* i. 25.

God, our Saxon forefathers were brought to acknowledge the faith of Christ.

His day is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

“At Canterbury, in England, of St. Augustine, Bishop, who being sent there together with others, by St. Gregory, Pope, preached the Gospel of Christ to the English nation; and there renowned for virtues and miracles, went to rest in our Lord.”

The Cathedral, Christ Church, Canterbury, is a monument of his labours; for he laid the foundation of that Church, close by the palace of King Ethelbert, his patron, whose house he converted at the King's desire into a monastery.

Bossuet says of him: “The history of the Church contains nothing finer than the entrance of the holy monk Augustine into the kingdom of Kent with forty of his companions, who preceded by the Cross and Image of the Great King, our Lord Jesus Christ, offered their solemn prayers for the conversion of England.”

For this and all other of God's glorious works may all glory be ascribed to God, for ever and ever. Amen.



BEDE, PR.

May 27th.

From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.—II. TIM. iii. 15.

THE Venerable Bede was a man who was eminently learned in the Holy Scriptures ; he spent nearly all his life in study, meditation and writing.

Born A.D. 673, near Jarrow, on the banks of the river Tyne, he was committed when seven years old to the care of St. Bennet Biscop, Abbot of St. Peter's, Weremouth. In the pursuit of his studies he became proficient in Greek, Latin, Church music and other ecclesiastical pursuits. His chief studies were, however, the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers of the Church. He was made Deacon when nineteen years old by St. John of Beverley, Bishop of Hexham ; and Priest A.D. 702 by the same Prelate.

During the intervals of his priestly work he employed himself in study, copying books by hand, in manual labour, prayer and meditation : laying the

Hom. XXXI.

foundations of those solid works which he has left behind.

To appreciate the labours of men like Venerable Bede, we must understand that England was at this period in a condition very different from its present settled state. The monasteries were then the only museums, libraries, seats of learning and hospitals. Christianity and civilization were not looked upon as mutually hostile. Printing was unknown. Reading was a privilege confined to a few. The English language was as yet unformed. Latin was then the language of the clergy and of the Church's Offices. The Venerable Bede's own account of himself is, that he applied himself wholly to meditation on the Holy Scriptures; and amidst his daily duties he was always employed either in learning, teaching or writing. From the time of his ordination to the priesthood until his fifty-ninth year, *i.e.*, during thirty years, he had compiled no less than forty-five works, of which thirty were commentaries on the Holy Scriptures. Continuing his labours, every kind of literature, science, philosophy and history was adorned by his diligent labours. Even during his lifetime his works were publicly read in the Churches.

One writing of him, says that it is amazing how this great man became so perfect in all the branches of these sciences to which he applied himself; that he conquered all difficulties, and brought his countrymen to form right notions of things; so that from the rude and boorish manners of their ancestors, they

began to be civilized through their desire of learning. Fuller writes of him that he expounded almost all the Bible, translated the Psalms and New Testament into the vernacular, and lived a comment on those words of the Apostle, shining as lights "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation."¹

His instruction was diligently sought by his contemporaries. At the invitation of Egbert, Archbishop of York, he went to York for some months to teach. The school which arose from this visit became very flourishing, and had the good fortune to be adorned with the reputation of Alcuin.

The end of Venerable Bede was very edifying. Finding that his departure was at hand, his pupil Wilberth was called to him. A chapter of the Commentary on St. Matthew was found unfinished.

"Dear master," said the pupil, "there is still one sentence that is not written." "Write quickly," said Venerable Bede. The young man after a while exclaimed, "It is now done." "You have well said, *Consummatum est*," was Bede's reply. He was then placed with his face looking towards the little oratory where he used to pray; and with the words, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," escaping from his lips, he went away in peace.

One writing of his departure, says: "After teaching all day, it was his custom to watch much in the night. Finding by the swelling of his extremities that death

¹ Phil. ii. 15.

was approaching, he received the Unction and holy Viaticum on the Tuesday before Ascension Day, and gave the kiss of peace to all his brethren, imploring their pious remembrance after death. On the feast of the Ascension, lying on sackcloth spread on the floor, he invited the grace of the Holy Ghost, and continued in praise and thanksgiving, in which he breathed forth his soul."

Venerable Bede died at the age of sixty-two, and was buried at St. Paul's, Jarrow, where a porch on the north side of the Church was called by his name.

Of none can the words of our text be said with greater truth than of Venerable Bede: "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." His works prove his laborious care in compiling from the works of sacred writers and historians. His information is usually so accurate that we cannot but marvel at his knowledge and its systematic arrangement. It is related of Venerable Bede that he had at one time six hundred monks amongst his pupils. What a variety of learning must he then have exhibited; what labour he must have bestowed upon his works in his monastic cell at Jarrow; what a wonderful life of energy and labour his must have been, varied as it was with the daily routine of priestly duties, manual labour and care of his scholars.

Besides his Commentaries on the Scriptures he wrote also an *Ecclesiastical History*, a work of great

merit, still appealed to by scholars and historians as a fount of information and a compendium of learning. Credulous though he may have sometimes been, his simple faith in the Saviour has never admitted of a doubt. He learnt, in the midst of his studious, monastic toil, to find Jesus in His Word. His simple life, great piety and holy conversation, have earned for him the title of "Venerable," and made him illustrious in the annals of the Saints of God.

His name is thus recorded in the Martyrology :

"In England, the deposition of Venerable Bede, Priest, most illustrious for sanctity and learning."

His relics were deposited in a beautiful shrine in the part of Durham Cathedral called the Galilee, and were violated by order of Henry VIII. A.D. 1541.





NICOMEDE, PR. M.

June 1st.

As unknown, and yet well known.—II. COR. vi. 9.

ST. NICOMEDE was a Priest at Rome, of whom little is recorded, save that he was apprehended during the persecution of Domitian, A.D. 95, for his zeal in assisting the martyrs and in giving them burial.

Being caught, he was ordered to sacrifice to the idols, and refusing, was beaten to death with clubs about A.D. 96.

His tomb is on the road to Nomento. Thus “as unknown” to us, he is yet “well known” to God, who called him to his eternal rest.

His memory is preserved in the Martyrology :

“At Rome, in the way called Numentana, the birthday of St. Nicomedes, Priest and Martyr, who for saying to those who would compel him to sacrifice, ‘I offer no sacrifice but to God Almighty who reigns in heaven,’ was a long time beaten with leaden whips, and so went unto our Lord.” (Sept. 15th.)

Hom. XXXII.

tyred him for his pains. A rich harvest of souls was brought in by his noble labours ; bishoprics were founded and Churches established. He died while on a message of love to his people ; but so far was he from refusing death, that he declined to defend himself, declaring that at last the day had come which he had been long expecting, which was to bring him to the joys of heaven.

The contributions which St. Boniface made to literature were not numerous, but they are clear in style, grave and simple. His life was active rather than contemplative, though he has left some homilies which bear his name. He took the Venerable Bede's writings with him into Germany. Several councils were held by him to repress heresy, and to establish the infant Church of Germany. At Soissons he presided at a Synod of Bishops, and performed the ceremony of crowning King Pepin. In A.D. 746 St. Boniface laid the foundation of the great Abbey of Fuld, which was long the most renowned in Germany. The Abbot of this monastery was a Prince of the Empire, and styled "The Primate of the Abbots of Germany."

The following notice of St. Boniface occurs in the Martyrology :

"Of St. Boniface, Bishop of Mentz, who, coming out of England to Rome, and sent back to Germany by Pope Gregory the Second, to preach the faith of Christ to that nation, after he had converted a great number, especially those of Friesland, to the Christian

religion, deserved to be called the Apostle of the Germans ; and finally being put to the sword by the furious Gentiles in Friesland, together with Eoban, and other servants of God, accomplished his martyrdom."

℣. And in other places, of many other Martyrs, and Confessors and holy Virgins,

To whose prayers and merits we heartily commend ourselves.

℟. Thanks be to God.





ALBAN, M.

June 17th; more properly, 22nd.

Proto-Martyr of Britain.

He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.—ST. MATTH. x. 41.

ST. ALBAN, Proto-Martyr of Britain, is an example of the truth contained in these words. It is true that oftentimes the only visible reward of the prophet and righteous man is the suffering of persecution, or even of death, for Christ's sake. But Jesus assures us that if one only perform the meanest office for a servant of God, reward will by no means be wanting. This was the case with St. Alban. A native of Verulam, a town formerly one of the most important in Britain, he went early to Rome for education and instruction; and after his return to Britain settled as a citizen at Verulam. He was a kind and hospitable man, though as yet a stranger to the Christian faith; and it was in the exercise of his hospitality that he first heard of the name of Christ.

Hom. XXXIV.

A clergyman, called by some Amphibalus, endeavouring to avoid the fury of his persecutors, sought shelter at his house, and was entertained by him at Verulam. St. Alban was so much struck with the holy manner of the stranger that he was soon brought to listen to his instructions and become a Christian. On the soldiers being sent by the Governor to seize the Priest, St. Alban exchanged clothes with him and passed himself off as his guest. The Governor highly provoked at the deception, ordered him to sacrifice to the idols; and on his refusal commanded him to be scourged and beheaded.

His executioner witnessing his constancy, threw away his naked sword and begged to die with him. A fresh executioner being found, two martyrs suffered together, June 22nd, A.D. 303.

“At the same time,” says Venerable Bede, “suffered Aaron and Julius, citizens of Chester, and many more of both sexes in several places, who, when they had endured sundry torments, and their limbs had been torn after an unheard-of manner, yielded their souls up to enjoy in the heavenly city a reward for the sufferings which they had passed through.”¹

The martyrdom of St. Alban at this early period of our island's history shews at how early Christianity was introduced here.

The Christian faith was probably preached here in the times of the Apostles. Venerable Bede tells us that whilst Eleutherius presided over the Roman

¹ *Eccles. Hist.* i. 7.

Church, Lucius, King of the Britons, sent a letter to him, entreating that by his command he might be made a Christian.¹ He soon obtained the object of his pious request, and the Britons preserved the faith which they had received, uncorrupted, entire, and in peace and tranquillity, until the time of the Emperor Diocletian. This took place about A.D. 156, and the persecution of Diocletian, under which St. Alban suffered, began in A.D. 286. It was during the time of Arcadius, Emperor of Rome (A.D. 394—407), that the heresy of Pelagius broke out; and in A.D. 429 Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus of Troyes came into Britain to confirm the country in the faith. They preached in the Churches, streets and fields, confounded heretics and baptized many Pagans. Again visiting the island in A.D. 447, St. Germanus, and Severus, a pupil of Lupus, confirmed the people again in the faith.

About A.D. 597 St. Augustine, the Apostle of England, was sent over by Pope Gregory.

St. Alban suffered martyrdom at a place called Redburn, about three miles from St. Alban's, in Hertfordshire. The Abbey of St. Alban's, formerly the foremost in England, was founded in his memory, A.D. 793 by Offa, King of the Mexicans.

St. Alban's name is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

“At Verulam, in England, of St. Alban, Martyr, who in the time of Diocletian, delivering himself to

¹ *Eccles. Hist.* i. 4.

the persecutors for the saving of a cleric whom he had lodged in his house, after blows and grievous torments was beheaded. There suffered with him one of the soldiers which led him to the place of execution, who by the way, being converted to Christ, deserved to be baptized in his own blood." (June 22nd.)

On the ecclesiastical history of this period Venerable Bede has the following interesting remarks :¹

A.D. 313. "When the storm of persecution ceased, the faithful Christians, who, during the time of danger, had hidden themselves in woods and deserts, and secret caves, appearing in public, rebuilt the Churches which had been levelled with the ground ; founded, erected and finished the temples of the holy Martyrs, and, as it were, displayed their conquering ensigns in all places ; they celebrated festivals, and performed their sacred rites with clean hearts and mouths. This peace continued in the Churches of Britain until the time of the Arian madness, which, having corrupted the whole world, infected this island also, so far removed from the rest of the globe, with the poison of its errors ; and when the plague was thus conveyed across the sea, all the venom of every heresy immediately rushed into the island, ever fond of something new, and never holding firm to anything."

¶ About this time, varying with Trinity Sunday, will begin the fourth season into which the year is divided : viz., *Tempus Peregrinationis* ; or the time of our earthly sojourn, lasting until Advent.

¹ B. 1—8.



TRANSLATION OF EDWARD, K.

June 20th.

Be glad, O ye righteous, and rejoice in the Lord, and be joyful
all ye that are true of heart.—Ps. xxxii. 12.

BY the translation of the relics of a Saint is meant nothing more than the removal of his body, or of any part of it, from one resting-place to another, where it is thought that they may be preserved with greater honour. It is a process which is part of the honour and reverence which loving Christians pay to the remains of those who have gone before us, in the cause of the cross of Christ.

There are no less than four of these festivals in the Prayer Book. This festival of the Translation of St. Edward, King of England, is the first; then follow the days of the Translation of St. Martin of Tours, St. Swithun and Edward the Confessor.

We have before spoken (March 18th) of Edward, King of England, and his barbarous murder by his stepmother, who wished for the crown for her son. This came to pass A.D. 979, and his body was hastily

Hom. XXXV.

buried at Wareham in Dorsetshire, where a Church, dedicated to our Lady, had been erected.

After the murder of this King, his base stepmother, Queen Elfrida, was touched with remorse for the crime, and resolved to spend her life in seclusion and penitence. Her son Ethelred succeeded to the throne which he had so basely obtained ; but he was a most unfortunate Prince, and his kingdom was miserably ravaged by the Danes.

In A.D. 1002, or twenty-three years after his death, his remains were translated by Elferius, King of the Mercians, to Edwardstow, near Shaftesbury.

“ Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”





VISITATION OF B. V. MARY.

July 2nd.

Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?—ST. LUKE i. 43.

THIS festival was instituted by Pope Urban VI., in A.D. 1389, to commemorate the visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth immediately after the Annunciation.

Following St. Luke's account of this mystery, we find the Angel Gabriel sent to tell Mary that her cousin Elizabeth had miraculously conceived in her old age, and was about to become the mother of St. John Baptist.

Mary, out of humility, concealed the favour she had received, and the dignity to which she had been raised by the Incarnation of the Son of God ; but in her joy she went to congratulate her cousin.

"Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah ; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth."¹ Thus did the God-Man Jesus Christ confer a blessing on the house of Zacharias in this visit to one of the

¹ St. Luke i. 39.

human race ; for no sooner had Mary entered the house of Zacharias than Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, and the infant John shared in the joy of that visit. Anticipating the use of reason, "it came to pass that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb ; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost : and she spake with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believeth : for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." ¹

Thus was St. John Baptist sanctified from his mother's womb, made a prophet ; and he adored the Messiah before his birth.

There was another effect which this visit of Mary's had. That was a gift for Elizabeth herself. She was filled with the Holy Ghost, so that she understood the mystery of the Incarnation.

In a rapture of astonishment Elizabeth was permitted to add to the angel's *Ave*. "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." She was herself blessed ; but Mary was more so, because her Son was Divine. She could only confess her inferiority : "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" She had conceived

¹ St. Luke i. 41—46.

one who was greater than the prophets, but her visitor Mary was to be the Mother of God.

But Mary could only burst forth into the praise of God. The *Magnificat*—that most perfect model of praise and thanksgiving for the Incarnation and testimony to her humility—was then first sung.¹ Mary stayed with her cousin Elizabeth about three months, and then returned to her own house.

The visitation of Mary was thus made immediately after the Annunciation of the Incarnation. Mary had just consented to the Divine Will. She had said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word." (i. 38.) And after Gabriel's departure for the throne of the Father, "she arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda ; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth." (v. 39.)

¹ St. Luke i. 46.





TRANSLATION OF MARTIN, B. C.

July 4th.

They beautified him with comely ornaments, and clothed him with a robe of glory.—ECCLUS. xlv. 7.

THIS is the festival of the ordination and translation of St. Martin, though his life and deeds are celebrated on Nov. 11th. There is in Western Christendom another festival of St. Martin: viz., the *Relatio*, or bringing back of his relics from Auxerre to Tours. (Dec. 13th.)

In the course of the homily for November 11th we shall learn that St. Martin was Bishop of Tours in the fourth century, and that he was very successful in extirpating idolatry from Gaul.

St. Martin died November 8th, A.D. 397, being then over eighty years of age; and survived St. Ambrose by seven months. He predicted his death for some period before; and it is stated that those who were present at his departure saw with admiration the brightness of his face and body, which seemed glorified by a heavenly light. After his death the honour of possessing his relics was sought and secured by the people of Tours, whither his relics were translated A.D. 473.

Hom. XXXVII.

The whole city came out to witness the translation, and many Churches have been built in his memory.

He is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

“ At Tours, the translation of St. Martin, Bishop and Confessor, and the dedication there of his Church ; upon which day also some years before he had been ordained Bishop.”

℣. And in other places, of many other martyrs, and Confessors, and holy virgins.

℟. Thanks be to God.





TRANSLATION OF THOMAS, ABP.

July 7th.

And he said, Let him alone ; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone.—2 KINGS xxiii. 18.

AFTER the murder of St. Thomas-a-Becket the body of the Saint was buried in the lower part of the Church, but it was shortly afterwards taken up and laid in a sumptuous shrine in the east of the Church. This took place in the year 1220. The pavement before the shrine is still in Canterbury Cathedral behind the high altar. It is approached from the nave by a flight of stone stairs, which remain to this day worn and hallowed by the knees of countless pilgrims. The crown of St. Thomas-a-Becket can be seen at the extreme east end of the Cathedral. Of the shrine which once contained the relics of St. Thomas we can say but little now. The shrines of the Saints have formerly been the glory of this land, and our descendants may look for other monuments of British piety than these. We would, however, place on record the following account of this noble monument of our Church as described by John Stow. (Reign of Henry VIII., A.D. 1538. *Au. reg.* 30.)

"It was built about a man's height, all of stone ; then upward of plain timber, within which was an iron chest containing the bones of St. Thomas Becket, as also the skull with the wound of his death, and the piece cut out of the skull laid in the same wound. These bones were (by command of Lord Cromwell) then and there burnt. The timber-work of this shrine on the outside was covered with plates of gold, damasked and embossed, garnished with brooches, images, angels, precious stones and great pearls ; the spoils of which shrine in gold and precious stones filled two great chests, such as six or seven strong men could do no more than convey one of them out of the Church."

The devout Christian will readily believe that this festival, and also that of the Saint, December 29th, were removed from the calendar of the English Church by the monarch during whose reign the event above described took place. He may profitably contrast the account which we have given with the course pursued by King Josiah in our text. The sepulchre of the man of God who was faithful to his message was left undisturbed in the days of the good King of Judah ; but St. Thomas-a-Becket's lot did not fall in such happy times. His episcopal life, spent in resisting usurpation, was ended by a violent death, followed by the disturbance of his very bones. He was one of those Saints of God of whom the world was not worthy. The chasuble which he wore is still preserved in the Cathedral of Sens as a precious relic.



TRANSLATION OF SWITHIN, B.

July 15th.

Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.—
ST. MATTH. v. 5.

ST. SWITHIN, Bishop of Winchester, was eminently a man of humble spirit, insomuch that even in his death he wished to be esteemed the lowest of all.

Born in the ninth century in Wessex, during the reign of Egbert, and of noble parentage, he spent his early childhood in great simplicity. He was ordained Priest by Bishop Helmestan, about A.D. 830, at Winchester, and made Provost of the Cathedral ; where, combining prudence with erudition, he was soon promoted by Egbert, King of the West Saxons. He was first made the King's director, and afterwards entrusted with the education of his son Ethelwolf.

In A.D. 852 he was consecrated to the see of Winchester by Cealnoth, Archbishop of Canterbury.

In this office his simple, laborious life was spent in building and consecrating Churches, visiting his diocese on foot, inviting sinners to repentance, and in labour for the good of souls. He was sparing and

Hom. XXXIX.

moderate in his diet, and excelled in humility and acts of mercy. His episcopate lasted for ten years. St. Swithin died July 2nd, A.D. 862 ; and at his own request was buried outside the Church at Winchester, where men might walk over, and the rain water his grave.

In the Martyrology he is thus mentioned :

“At Winchester in England, the deposition of Swithin, Bishop, whose sanctity shone forth by the grace of miracles.”

In this country the day of the translation of his relics is observed.

In the time of King Edgar, A.D. 971, his relics were taken up and translated by Bishop Ethelwold into the Cathedral at Winchester, which after being dedicated before to St. Peter and St. Paul, was now dedicated also to St. Swithin. It is related that on the day of his translation it began to rain heavily, and that it continued to fall for thirty-nine days ; whence has arisen the popular idea that if it rain on his day there will be incessant showers for the thirty-nine days following. On the rebuilding of the Cathedral in A.D. 1093, the relics of the Saint were transferred to a more costly shrine, and they now lie under a broad stone in the east end of the choir.

The city of Winchester, to which St. Swithin was a great benefactor, had formerly been a station for the Roman troops, and known by them as Venta. It was afterwards the seat of the Saxon kings ; and in A.D. 635, when Dorchester was made an episcopal see,

a Church was built there, which was endowed in A.D. 855 by King Ethelwolf. It became an episcopal see under Nini, third Bishop of the West Saxons, and the Church became one of the most flourishing in England.

St. Swithin is said to have built the eastern bridge of Winchester ; but he lived to see the city plundered by the Danes A.D. 860.





MARGARET, V. M.

July 20th.

A merchantman, seeking goodly pearls : who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.—ST. MATTH. xiii. 45, 46.

ST. MARGARET, Virgin and Martyr, was the daughter of a heathen priest named Edessius, of Antioch, in Pisidia, and was instructed in the Christian faith by her nurse.

When her father found that she was a Christian he was filled with rage, and refused to allow her to remain in the house. She was therefore obliged to become servant to her nurse. The Prefect of Pisidia happening to see her, wished to obtain her for his wife ; but finding that she was a Christian, had her apprehended and thrown into prison. Here, after enduring the rack and many other torments, she was beheaded at Antioch, A.D. 278.

The following conversation, which took place between the Prefect and St. Margaret, illustrates her trial :

After being asked her name, family and religion, she replied that she was Margaret, of good family,

Hom. XL.

and a Christian. "So noble and beautiful a lady should not worship a crucified God," said the Prefect. "How know you that He was crucified," asked she. "From your books," was the answer. "As you read there of His infamous death, why do you not believe also His glory, which is your shame, and that His death is man's salvation?" The Prefect then cast her into prison till next day, when she was again brought before him. "Foolish girl," he said, "have pity on your beauty, and worship our gods." She answered, "I adore Him before whom earth trembles, whom the sea dreads, and all creatures fear." He replied, "Unless you obey me, I will have you tortured." She answered, "Christ died for me, and so I wish to die for Him."

St. Margaret was then tortured and put to death. She was what her name implies "a pearl," by reason of her purity and innocence.





ST. MARY MAGDALENE.

July 22nd.

And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment.—ST. LUKE vii. 37.

THIS is part of the account which we have of St. Mary Magdalene, the notorious sinner, of either Nain, Tiberias, or of some neighbouring city, who came to the feast given by Simon the Pharisee.

She had been a great sinner, but considering herself, she saw the misery of her condition, the happiness which she had lost, and the punishment she had to expect. From this she went a step further, thinking of the love of Him whom she had wronged; then followed her tears and her approach to the Saviour.

We know how He received her. He had said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The Pharisee saw her come, and said: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner."¹ But by a parable which appealed

¹ v. 39.

to his reason He made the man rebuke his own fancy, and called attention to her repentance.

“And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet : but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss : but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint : but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much ; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.”¹

Her reward was great. St. Mary Magdalene was the first to see the risen Lord on that glorious Easter morn when He arose triumphantly over sin and death.² She came early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre.³

St. Mary Magdalene is thus commemorated in the Martyrology :

“At Marseille, the birthday of St. Mary Magdalene, out of whom our Lord cast seven devils, and who

¹ St. Luke vii. 44 to end.

² St. Mark xvi. 9.

³ St. John xx. 1.

deserved first to see our Saviour after he was risen from death."

In the first Prayer-book of King Edward VI. of England there is a proper Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the day, which are all now wanting.





ST. ANNE.

July 26th.

A chosen vessel unto me.—ACTS ix. 15.

ST. JOACHIM and St. Anne were the parents of Mary the Blessed Virgin. Little is known of them, except that they led godly lives, and that they were well advanced in years before a child was given them. In answer to their prayers, Mary was born : so often is it the case that the last extremity to which men are sometimes reduced is the very opportunity which God chooses for His interposition.

The word Anne signifies “gracious,” and her name is in accordance with the character of the holy mother of the Blessed Virgin. For not only was she in name a vessel of grace, but in actual fact ; for by her possession of that rich treasure she was chosen to bring up Mary in the most perfect virtue. Her care of her daughter was the means for her own sanctification—a great lesson this for all parents, whose great duty is to bring up their children to know God and to serve Him.

The life of St. Anne has been much obscured by the fabulous accounts given of her in the false gospels,

which were written in the interests of error and heresy during the early ages of the Church. A Church was erected in her honour at Constantinople by the Emperor Justinian I., A.D. 550; and many Churches are dedicated in her name in England. Her name and figure are often found in the catacombs, and she is often represented in modern times with a book in her hand, and teaching the Blessed Virgin to read.

After her death her body was brought from Palestine to Constantinople, A.D. 710; and portions of her relics sent to different parts of the world.

An ancient genealogy possesses the following account of St. Anne :

“There were three sisters of Bethlehem, daughters of Matthan the priest, and Mary his wife, under the reign of Cleopatra and Casopares, King of Persia, before the reign of Herod, the son of Antipater. The eldest was Mary, the second was Lobe, and the youngest's name was Anne. The eldest being married in Bethlehem, had for daughter Salome; Lobe, the second, likewise married in Bethlehem, and was the mother of Elizabeth; last of all the third married in Galilee, and brought forth Mary the mother of Christ.”

She is thus commemorated in the Martyrology :

“The departure out of this life of St. Anne, mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.”



LAMMAS DAY ; OR, ST. PETER'S CHAINS. *Aug. 1st.*

And the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field.—EXOD. xxiii. 16.

THE name Lammas has been given from ancient times to the first day of August, in consequence of the pious custom of presenting a lamb as the first-fruits of the flocks at the celebration of the Holy Mysteries on this day. This custom used to prevail extensively at York, where tenants who held lands of the Cathedral used to offer a live lamb on this day to that Church. Others have derived the name from the feast of the first-fruits of corn ; a service of thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth having been anciently celebrated on this day.

In either case, whichever derivation we prefer to take, the festival of to-day brings before us a very devout custom, that of thanking God for the first-fruits of the harvest, and solemnly offering them to His service. Whether the offering consist of an animal or of corn, the intention of the offerer is the same—namely, the consecration of God's gift to His service for His honour. This day is mentioned frequently in the Anglo-Saxon chronicles as having been

observed by our Saxon forefathers as early as A.D. 921, and probably the festival is in reality much older. What a lesson do we thus learn from our Saxon forefathers in these days of refined materialism! Do we not owe to God all that we have, the first-fruits of our lives and of our actions? Must we not acknowledge Him to be the beginning and the end of all things? Under the old law of Moses the precept to offer to Him the first-fruits of the produce of the harvest was most rigorously required; and surely Christians can not be behind the Jews in their thankfulness to God, "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."¹

Our text reminds us that "the feast of harvest," the first-fruits of men's labours, was one of the three great festivals of the Jewish year. "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread . . . and the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of in-gathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field."² Lammas Day reminds us of the second of these feasts, being devoted to thanksgiving for the first-fruits of the year's labour.

We must not, however, forget that this day is also known as the Memorial of St. Peter's Chains; or, the delivery from prison of St. Peter, an account of which we have preserved in the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 17.

² Exod. xxiii. 14—17.

It is stated that the fetters with which the Apostle was confined in his prison cell at Jerusalem were preserved, and afterwards presented to Eudocia, the wife of Theodosius the Emperor, who brought them, A.D. 439, from Jerusalem ; and gave them to the Church of St. Peter *in carcere* at Rome. There they were kept with great care, and this day was instituted in honour of his deliverance from custody.

The 1st of August is thus mentioned in the Roman Martyrology :

“ At Rome, on the Mount Esquilinè, the dedication of St. Peter *ad vincula*.”

There is a Norman Chapel in the Tower of London dedicated in the same name.





TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR BLESSED LORD. *Aug. 6th.*

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, and behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him."—ST. MATTH. xvii. 1—4.

IT has often been a subject of remark with reference to the Book of Common Prayer, that, with all its excellencies, it stands alone in Christendom for some peculiarities which we should not have at first sight expected.

The festival of the Transfiguration, for instance, is one of those events in our Lord's life which is commemorated in the calendar; but not only is there no Collect, Epistle and Gospel provided for it, but the Church of England stands alone in presenting this defect.

The ancient Church of York, as well as that of Sarum, had, however, a proper Collect for the day; and was enriched by a proper Epistle and Gospel, which gave in detail an account of this wondrous

event. The use of Hereford never received the feast of the Transfiguration into its calendar at all ; while the Greek Church to this day uses all the three accounts which the Evangelists have given us in celebrating this important festival. The present use of the Western branch of Christendom has preserved the account of the Transfiguration as the Gospel for the second Sunday, as well as for the Ember Saturday in Lent ; and in this respect the modern use of Rome coincides exactly with the ancient use of the Church of England at York and Salisbury. It took place in the third year of our Lord's public life, A.D. 32. To-day's festival recalls the day of its first publication to the world, though it is not the day of the Transfiguration itself.

Notwithstanding this serious omission in our present Prayer Book, the full and complete Office for the festival of the Transfiguration can be found in the Prayer Book of Edward VI., published by authority of Parliament in the second year of the reign of that monarch ; and from it we may collect many useful and valuable lessons.

The Collect contains the following beautiful petition :

"O God, who didst this day reveal from heaven unto the Fathers of either Testament, Thine only-begotten Son, wonderfully transfigured before them : Grant unto us, we beseech Thee, so to please Thee by our doings as evermore to attain unto the contemplation of His glory, in whom thou didst testify that

Thy fatherly Majesty was well pleased : through the same Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Epistle, which was read by the sub-Deacon at the pulpit, was taken from the 2nd Epistle of St. Peter, and narrated how the eye-witnesses of His Majesty who were with Him in the Mount, heard the voice which came from heaven, "from the excellent glory": "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Gospel, read by the Deacon, was from the chapter whence our text is taken, and gave in detail the circumstances of the Transfiguration.

It may be well for us to recall to memory the account of this wondrous event as it has been handed down to us by the three Evangelists, SS. Matthew, Mark and Luke.

We read, then, how Jesus, after foretelling His Passion, about eight days after "took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there walked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep, and when they were awake they saw his glory and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not

knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone."

The festival of the Transfiguration brings before us the subject of the glory of Jesus Christ. The Collect prays that we may so please God by our doings that we attain evermore unto the contemplation of His glory, in whom God did testify that His fatherly Majesty was well pleased. The Gospel tells us that Peter and James and John saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him. And the Epistle tells how the eye-witnesses of His Majesty heard the voice which came to Him "from the excellent glory," which said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Greatly, then, as we lose by the want of the festival of the Transfiguration with its proper service, we may to a great extent make up for our loss by considering the glory of Jesus Christ.

No visible Shechinah surrounded the human head of the Saviour during His life on earth. That face, so full of sweetness and love, was the face of a perfect man, no less truly than it was of perfect God. Did His disciples then see Him as He journeyed throughout Palestine? His countenance was that of a man; His form was that of a man; His acts were those of a perfect man—one without spot of sin, without

flaw, without the least stain of evil. Yet He had fore-shewed His death to them ; he had made preparation for leaving the world. Simon Peter had made the confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." (Matth. xvi. 16.) And Jesus had answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." It was here that He prepared His disciples for that betrayal at Jerusalem ; the suffering, as He describes it, of "many things" of the elders and chief priests and scribes ; His being killed, and His rising again the third day. He rebuked Peter for presuming to say, "Be it far from thee, Lord ; this shall not be unto thee." Then He prepared His disciples for the sufferings which they were to undergo for His sake ; for the taking up of the Cross ; for the loss of this present life and earthly goods, for the sake of glory and eternal life hereafter. After six days (sufficiently long a time for them to think over these things, and deliberate on the cost of becoming His disciples), Jesus took them up into the "high mountain apart,"

and there was transfigured before them. "His face," like that of Moses, "did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Do you remember how, when Moses came down from Sinai with the two tables of testimony in his hand, the skin of his face shone while he talked with them: so much so that the people were afraid to come nigh him, and he put a veil upon his face when he spoke to them? Here was an event of a similar nature. Moses was the legislator of the Old Testament, returning from Sinai to the people, with the tables of the Ten Commandments in his hands; Jesus was the lawgiver of the New Testament, the giver of the new law, promulgated from the Mount in that sermon, declaring the blessedness of all who obeyed, not in letter, but in spirit, the precepts of the ancient law of Sinai.

And not only was Jesus the Legislator of the new law, but he was also the Prophet, proclaiming the will of God. What, then, could be more fitting than that on the Mount of Transfiguration should have been seen Jesus together with Moses and Elias? Elijah, the great prophet of the Old Testament; Elijah, the ascetic, to whom God had appeared in Horeb; Elijah, before whom the trial was made whether it were the Lord or Baal whom they were to follow; Elijah translated to heaven, leaving a seven-fold portion of his spirit on his successor. We see on the Mount of Transfiguration Jesus in His glory, together with Moses and Elias; fitting type of Him who came to fulfil the law; of Him to whom all the

prophets bore witness ; a wondrous attestation of His divinity, His mission from God, and His acknowledged work on earth.

The festival of the Transfiguration is again valuable to us, by reason of the comfort and strengthening of faith which it gives us in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

We read that after the bright cloud of glory had overshadowed them, there came "a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased : hear ye him." It was the direct voice of the Father testifying to the divinity of the Son. From the Shechinah of divine glory came the voice which testified of the Son. It was no mere phantasy. The voice was heard by the three who were with the Saviour. "When the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid."¹

It is believed that Mount Tabor was the scene of the Transfiguration, rising as it does in the vast Galilee plain, apart from the haunts of men. The same three Apostles also were the witnesses of the Transfiguration as of the Agony in the garden of Gethsemane. From this festival, therefore, we may derive comfort, not only from the fact of the Transfiguration of Him who afterwards suffered, but by encouraging ourselves with the thought that, though Calvary is the way that leads to eternal glory, Tabor comes before to set that

¹ St. Matt. xvii. 6, 7.

Transfiguration of our Blessed Lord. 155

bliss evidently before our eyes. With St. Paul we may learn to think nothing of the sufferings of this present time, knowing that they “are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”¹ hereafter.

¹ Rom. viii. 18.





NAME OF JESUS.

Aug. 7th.

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.—

PHIL. ii. 10.

THE festival of the name of Jesus is not peculiar to our calendar, being found also in the missal of Western Christendom on the 11th of January, as well as on this day in the missal of the ancient Church of Sarum. Little is known of the history of this ancient festival, except that the day was formerly dedicated to the memory of one Afra, who was converted to Christianity by Narcissus, Bishop of Jerusalem, and afterwards martyred.

The name Jesus, signifying Saviour, represents the Hebrew Joshua, or Jehoshua, which is a contraction of the Jehovah Jeshua, or Salvation of Jehovah. It was accordingly borne by many persons under the Old Testament.

It was, for instance, given to Joshua, the son of Nun, whose original name was Oshea, but who received the name of Jesus for a prefix when he was made the leader of his people into the Promised Land. "And Moses called Oshea, the Son of Nun,

Hom. XLV.

Jehoshua.”¹ It was again given to Joshua the High Priest, who is related in the Book Ecclesiasticus to have led Israel back from captivity and restored the temple at Jerusalem. “So was Jesus the son of Josedec : who in their time builded the house, and set up an holy temple to the Lord, which was prepared for everlasting glory.”²

The holy name of Jesus was, however, twice given to our Lord by special revelation.

At the Annunciation to Mary of her holy Conception the first mention of the name was made. “And behold,” said Gabriel, “thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.”³ And again to St. Joseph, when the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, the promise was made : “She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus : for he shall save his people from their sins.”⁴ It is thus the same as Emmanuel, for the Evangelist writes further : “And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”⁵

The dignity and sanctity of the name of Jesus are well set forth by the inspired Apostle in our text.

After recounting that Jesus, though “in the form of God,” was “formed in fashion as a man,” “and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” he continues : “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is

¹ Numb. xiii. 16. ² Ecclus. xlix. 12. ³ St. Luke i. 31.

⁴ St. Matthew i. 21. ⁵ Ibid. v. 23.

above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

It has hence become an ancient law and custom of the Church that the faithful should bow the head whenever the holy name is mentioned. This custom was formally confirmed in the thirteenth century by the Council of Lyons ; and the Church of England by her 18th canon, passed in 1603-4, enjoins this act of reverence on her children.

In our great Universities, both at Oxford and Cambridge, there is a College with its Chapel dedicated in the holy name of Jesus ; and at Enfield there is a Chapel in the same dedication.

The good Bishop, Jeremy Taylor, writing on the subject of the holy name of Jesus, says :

" This miraculous name is above all the powers of magical enchantments, the nightly rites of sorcerers, the secrets of Memphis, the drugs of Thessaly, the silent and mysterious murmurs of the wise Chaldees, and the spells of Zoroastres. This is the name at which the devils did tremble, and pay their enforced and involuntary adorations by confessing the Divinity, and quitting their professed and usurped habitations. If our prayers be made in this name, God opens the windows of heaven and rains down benediction. At the mention of this name the blessed Apostles, and Hermione the daughter of St. Philip, and Philotheus

the son of Theophila; and St. Hilarion, and St. Paul the Eremite, and innumerable other lights who followed hard after the Sun of Righteousness, wrought great and prodigious miracles; 'signs and wonders and healings were done by the name of the holy Child Jesus.' This is the name which we should engrave in our hearts, and write upon our foreheads, and pronounce with our most harmonious accents, and rest our faith upon, and place our hopes in, and love with the overflowings of charity and joy and adoration. And as the revelation of this name satisfied the hopes of all the world, so it must determine our worshipings and the addresses of our exterior and interior religion, it being that name whereby God and God's mercies are made presential to us and proportionate objects of our religion and affections."⁶

⁶ Life of Christ. Part i. Lec. v.





LAURENCE, DE. M.

Aug. 10th.

Gold is tried in the fire : and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.—ECCLUS. ii. 5.

ST. LAURENCE was by birth a Spaniard, and became so well known for his virtue that he was recommended to Pope Xystus II., and made Archdeacon of Rome A.D. 257. He was thus the first of the seven Cardinal Deacons at Rome, an office of great trust. To our Saint was committed the charge of the treasury and riches of the Church, and the distribution of its revenues amongst the poor.

In the year that St. Laurence was made Archdeacon, the Emperor Valerian was induced to publish his edict against Christianity ; which he foolishly imagined he was able to destroy, by putting to death all Bishops, Priests and Deacons, whom he could find.

The first to fall under the sentence was the holy Pope Xystus II. As he was led forth to execution he was followed by St. Laurence the Deacon, who wished to die with him, and upbraided him with complaints for going forth to the sacrifice without his faithful attendant. Moved with compassion at the

sight of his grief, the holy Martyr bid him be of good cheer. "I do not leave you, my son," he said, "but a greater trial and a more glorious victory await you in the vigour of your youth, for you shall follow me in three days." He then gave St. Laurence instructions to distribute immediately among the poor the treasures of the Church, which were committed to his care, lest they should be robbed of their patrimony by their falling into the hands of the persecutors.

St. Laurence accordingly sought out all the poor widows and orphans, and gave them all the money and treasure which the Church possessed, selling even the sacred vessels for this purpose. These persons numbered over one thousand five hundred, besides the list of virgins, widows and orphans, who were maintained by the Church. A list of all these names had been kept by the Bishop or the Archdeacon, that their necessities might be relieved, and necessary provision made for them.

On the Prefect's hearing of the treasures which the Church possessed, he was smitten with covetousness and wished to have them. He accordingly sent for St. Laurence; and speaking to him with much craftiness and dissimulation, wished to be shewn the treasures for the replenishment of the Emperor's coffers. St. Laurence, without any hesitation, replied that the Church was indeed very rich; nor had the Emperor anything to shew that was at all equal to its wealth. With a little time to make an inventory, he would be able to set all before him.

The Prefect was greatly gratified with the answer, and imagining himself already possessed of immense wealth, gave Laurence three days' respite.

Meanwhile St. Laurence went all over the city to make the inventory. He sought the streets, the highways and the hedges; and with great industry brought together, and placed in rows before the Church, the aged, the blind, the lame, the maimed, the lepers, the orphans, the widows and the virgins, whom the Church supported with her daily alms. The Prefect on seeing the sight, turned with great indignation on St. Laurence, and wished to know where the treasures were which he had promised to shew. St. Laurence, however, only replied that the gold which he sought was nothing but that earthly gold, which incites men to all manner of crimes. The true gold which these poor objects before him possessed was the light which came to them from above. Their sufferings were the means of their highest advantage and gain; but vices and passions were the real diseases by which the great ones of the world were made wretched and contemptible. "Behold," he said, "in these poor persons the treasures which I promised to shew you. These are our real and true riches; make what use you may of them." Thus did St. Laurence exhort the Prefect, urging him to repent and give alms of his goods, and shewing him that the Church placed her true riches in heaven above.

The Prefect, however, was far from being moved thereby.

He considered that the imperial power had been insulted and his office put to shame. So he ordered a gridiron to be got ready and a fire to be kindled under it. St. Laurence was to be bound upon it with chains. The Martyr however, on his iron bed, was far from feeling compunction for the rage of the persecutor, or pain in the midst of his torments. The more the fire scorched his body the more earnestly did he implore the Divine mercy for the conversion of the City of Rome. So great was his tranquillity, that, after suffering a long time, he turned to the judge, and said with a cheerful countenance, "Let my body be now turned ; one side is broiled enough." And when, in obedience to the Prefect, the Martyr's body had been turned, he said, "It is dressed enough ; you may now eat." Still he turned his eyes to heaven, and prayed for the conversion of Rome. So he calmly died, August 10th, A.D. 258.

Prudentius tells us that noblemen came round him, carried off his body and buried it. Several senators, seeing his constancy, heroic fortitude and tender piety, were converted upon the spot to the Christian faith ; and from that hour idolatry in Rome began sensibly to decline. During the reign of Constantine the Great a Church was built over his tomb on the road to Tiber, called "St. Laurence's without the Walls." It is one of the five chief Churches of Rome.

How powerful is the grace of God to sweeten whatever is bitter or harsh to flesh and blood ! A

lively faith, like that of St. Laurence, makes Christians despise the honours of the world ; and leads us to seek God's holy will in all things with joy unutterable. Thus whatever we have to pass through—whether trial, trouble, tribulation, vexation or disappointment, all becomes as nothing beside the amazing love of Jesus for us.

St. Laurence is thus commemorated :

“At Rome, in the way Tiburtina, the birthday of St. Laurence, Archdeacon, who, in the persecution of Valerian, after he had endured many torments for Christ, as imprisonment, beating with scorpions, cudgels and leaden whips, and burning with fiery plates, at last, broiled upon a gridiron, accomplished his martyrdom ; whose body was buried by Blessed Hippolytus, and Justin, Priest, in the Churchyard of Cyriaca, in the field Verano.”

To God be glory for ever and ever.

Amen.





ASSUMPTION OF B. V. MARY.

Aug. 15th.

I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus, and as a cypress tree upon the mountains of Hermon.—ECCLUS. xxiv. 13.

A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.—REV. xii. 1.

THE festival of the Assumption of the blessed Virgin Mary is, the greatest which the Church celebrates in her honour. It is a “double of the first class” in the Western Church, and has been kept in the East with great devotion ever since the sixth century. The statement of the event which is commemorated to-day may be found in the works of the holy Bishop of Tours, St. Gregory. Writing in the sixth century, he says, that when the Apostles heard of the approaching death of the blessed Virgin at Jerusalem, they came and watched with her, A.D. 48.¹ Whilst they were there, her dissolution taking place, her soul was received by the Divine Son, and entrusted to St. Michael the Archangel. Her body was then placed in a tomb—probably in the Valley of Jehosaphat—where it is still pointed out; but the Lord again standing by, commanded her body to be translated to Paradise, where, restored to

life, she enjoys eternal bliss. This account is also substantially the same as that of St. Andrew, the learned Archbishop of Crete, in the seventh century,³ and of many other Catholic writers.

This pious opinion of the corporal Assumption of the blessed Virgin has obtained credence in the Church for now many centuries. Festivals have been held in its honour ; pilgrimages have been made to her vacant tomb in the Valley of Jehosaphat, and amongst others, by St. Willibald, A.D. 740.

The acts of the Saints are full of reasons why the Assumption should have taken place ; and the idea thus gaining ground, has elevated the festival to its present dignity in the Church.

"Justly," says St. Bernard, "is Mary said to be clothed with the sun, for she penetrates into the abyss of divine wisdom beyond all belief, so as to appear immersed in light inaccessible, as far as is possible for a creature, without personal union with the Deity." Like a cedar of Libanus, she has been exalted ; as a cypress tree upon the mountains of Hermon. In her exaltation we seem to see the triumph of the whole of mankind over the fruits of the fall. God has been pleased not to break, but to repair what was bruised, forming the new Adam—the second head of the human race—from the old ; and transforming Eve, our fallen mother, into Mary, the Mother of the Eternal.

In thinking of so august and favoured a being as the blessed Virgin, it seems a hard and unnatural

thing to refer to the heresies which have clustered round her holy name. Yet she, who on earth endured the piercing of her soul by the sword, in the violent death of her Son, in the pains and agonies which He underwent, seems again in her exaltation, to need her wonderful meekness, patience and submission to God's will. Strange that she, the blessed Mother of the Eternal, should have had her "adversaries,"³ denying her virginity and attributing to her natural motherhood by St. Joseph.

But, as error always proceeds by the rule of contrariety, it is not surprising that the contrary error should arise in the same country and age, and that its votaries should offer sacrifices of cakes to her as to a divinity.⁴ Then uniting (as errors always do) against the truth, both heresies seemed to join⁵ at last in attacking the title by which Mary is known in the Church—viz., the name *Theotokos*, or Mother of God; whereby is signified that she was the blessed Mother of our Lord God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Avoiding error with respect to so august a person as the blessed Virgin Mary, we would give her the honour and respect due to her in the Church of God. Blessed she was among women, highly favoured indeed; more nearly brought to the Godhead than any other creature, she merits for ever the respect of all Christian people. While some have unduly exalted her, others have irreverently degraded her. The Church of God alone gives to Mary her mede of honour. "In respect of her," says Bishop Pearson,

“it was therefore necessary that we might perpetually preserve an esteem of her person proportionable to so high a dignity. It was her own prediction, ‘From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed;’⁶ but the obligation is ours to call her, to esteem her so. If Elizabeth cried out with so loud a voice, ‘Blessed art thou among women,’⁷ when Christ was but newly conceived in her womb, what expressions of honour and admiration can we think sufficient now that Christ is in heaven, *and that Mother with Him!* Far be it from any Christian to derogate from that special privilege granted her, which is incommunicable to any other. We cannot bear too reverend a regard unto the Mother of our Lord, so long as we give her not that worship which is due unto the Lord Himself. Let us keep the language of the primitive Church. Let her be honoured and esteemed; let Him be worshipped and adored.”⁸

With these wise words of our good Bishop let us be content.

We would, however, notice that this festival was in ancient times known as the Repose, or Translation of the blessed Virgin. And whether by this expression is denoted the Assumption of her soul only, or of her body as well, the object of the present festival remains the same—viz., that we be full of thankfulness and praise to God for the entry of the blessed Virgin Mary into the joys prepared for her in heaven.

We should again try to imitate the great virtues of the wonderful Mother, her humility, her resignation to

God's will, and her immaculate purity, remembering the high dignity of her position and her queenly glory now.

NOTES.

- ¹ *Miraculorum*. Lit. 1. *De Gloria Mari.* cap. 4.
- ² *De Laudibus Assumpt. Virg.* Orat. 2.
- ³ The Antidicomarianites.
- ⁴ The Collyridians.
- ⁵ In the heresy of Nestorius. On these see St. Epiphan. *Haer.* 77—79, St. Greg. Nyssa, St. Bernard, and St. Francis de Sales.
- ⁶ St. Luke i. 48.
- ⁷ St. Luke i. 42.
- ⁸ *On the Creed*. Article iii. "Born of the Virgin Mary."





AUGUSTINE, B. C. D.

Aug. 28th.

The mouth of the righteous is exercised in wisdom : and his tongue will be talking of judgement. The law of his God is in his heart : and his goings shall not slide.—Ps. xxxvii. 31, 32.



HIS great model of Christian penitents, champion of the Catholic faith and bright light of the Church of Christ, was born at Togaste, a small town in Africa, on the 13th of November, A.D. 354. His parents, though not rich, were of good position ; his father Patricius was an idolater, but converted by the entreaties of St. Monica, his wife.

In his youth, unenlightened by the grace of God, with no object in life before him but to become celebrated in rhetoric and philosophy, he had the great misfortune to fall into vice ; a humiliation which he deplored greatly in his *Confessions*, a work of wonderful power, in which he describes the awful struggles he passed through in his early life. He was, however, rescued from this miserable condition by the care of his mother, St. Monica, by whom he was instructed in the Christian religion and taught to pray.

Hom. XLVIII.

At the age of sixteen he returned to Togaste, from Madaura, a neighbouring city, where he had been taught grammar, poetry and rhetoric ; and a year after, in the year A.D. 370, went to Carthage, where he continued his studies with great energy and zeal. Here, however, he had the misfortune to fall into the errors of the Manichees, with which he was troubled until his twenty-eighth year.

This heretical system, which was condemned by the Church in many Councils, was based on the Persian doctrine of Dualism, and engrafted upon it much Christian teaching of a very perverted kind. "I sought with pride," he said, "what only humility could find. Miserable man that I was, I left the nest, imagining myself able to fly; and I fell to the ground."¹ Pride, together with revolt against legitimate authority, led him into this unfortunate state, and also into enlisting others in the same errors with himself.

It was in this condition that he left Carthage, and became the master of a school of grammar at Togaste. He was at this time not more than twenty ; and had suffered a great loss in the death of a dear friend, who had been his companion in study for many years. Unable longer, therefore, to bear Togaste, he returned to Carthage, where he continued his former line of conduct, and made the acquaintance of the Manichæan Bishop, Faustus. This great Doctor of the heretics, however, did not seem to him either to shed a lustre

¹ Sermon li.

on the heresies he taught, or to confer any great spiritual illumination on his disciples. The great mind of the future Saint and Doctor wished for something more stable than the fluctuating winds of Manichæism ; something purer than the foulness of the Demiurge, to whom the sectarians had falsely attributed the creation of the world. Yet, unsettled in opinion, and unresolved as to his next course of conduct, he removed to Rome, and from thence to Milan.

At Milan St. Augustine met with the Bishop, St. Ambrose, whose words of eloquence charmed him, while he refused to listen to the truths he taught. Yet though Augustine listened to gratify his love of eloquence, the doctrine, falling on his ears like rain on the block of stone, gradually wore away the asperities of his nature, and seemed to cause the seeds of virtue to spring forth in his heart.

He began to think that there was goodness yet in what he said ; that the Manichees unjustly divided the ancient law and the prophets ; that they had wholly perverted the teaching of Catholic Christendom ; and though withholding his assent to the truth, he thought that there was more to be said in its favour than he had imagined. With great eagerness he took to reading the New Testament, and especially the inspired writings of St. Paul. Here he found what he had long wished for, what every sinner wants, and what every soul must find before rest and comfort can be obtained. He saw a new light cast on the

Old Testament ; the glory of creation pointed out ; a new way shewn that leadeth to the Father of Spirits, through His Son Jesus Christ ; and he learned what he had often felt, that he had a law in his members warring against the law in his mind, and that nothing could deliver him from this body of death but the grace of Jesus Christ. He became convinced of the truth of the divine law exhibited by the Catholic Church ; but the apprehension of innumerable difficulties in practice beset him, so that he feared to enter resolutely on it.

"I sighed," he said, "and longed to be delivered, but was kept fast bound, not with exterior chains or irons, but with my own iron will. The enemy held my will, and of it he had made a chain with which he had fettered me fast. . . . The load of the world agreeably kept me down, as happens in sleep ; and the desires by which I meditated to rise were like the strugglings of such as would awake, who nevertheless are still overpowered with drowsiness and fall back into their former slumber, whilst a heavy laziness benumbs their limbs, though reason tells them it is wrong and that it is high time to awake." ¹

The conversion of St. Augustine from this condition did not take place till A.D. 386, when he was in the thirty-second year of his age.

Quitting his school and the teaching of rhetoric, he retired to a country house at Cassiacum, near Milan, with his mother, St. Monica, and several of his friends.

¹ *Conf. Lit. viii. cap. 5.*

Here he employed himself in study and prayer, and endeavoured to subdue his senses, purify his affections, and prepare himself for the leading of a new life in Christ. He besought God particularly for purity of heart and perfect divine love, that he might devote to God his whole life, together with all his strength and powers. He was baptized by St. Ambrose on Easter-eve, A.D. 387.

In compliance with his mother's wish, he set out for Africa ; but at Ostia he had the misfortune to lose St. Monica, who died rejoicing that the desire of her heart was fulfilled by her son's conversion.¹ There being now no reason for his hastening to Africa, he went to Rome for a year, where he wrote two works on the contrast between Catholic and Manichæan morality. Towards the end of A.D. 388 he settled at Togaste, and for nearly three years lived in retirement ; but happening to go to Hippo, he was ordained Priest, and four years later was consecrated to be Coadjutor Bishop with Valerian, to the see of that place.² On the death of Valerian he was recognised as Bishop of Milan, held that see for thirty-five years, and was universally acknowledged as the leader of the Church in Africa.

Of his labours in the diocese of Milan we have little need to say.

His works occupy many volumes. They include treatises on every subject relating to Christian doctrine

¹ A.D. 387. V. *Conf.* ix. 10, 2.

² In December, A.D. 395.

and practice ; there are expositions of Scripture ; works against the Manichees, Donatists, Pelagians, and other sectaries ; and an immense number of sermons and letters. His greatest work on *The City of God*, began in A.D. 412 and finished in A.D. 426, is a noble defence of Christianity against the heathen—the first professed treatise on the Church of Christ, and the most important of the apologies against the attacks of Paganism.

Nor were his pastoral labours less abundant. In Africa the Donatist heresy was so rife, that there were hardly any Catholics in Hippo at all at the time of his consecration. Yet by the sanctity of his life, his indefatigable zeal, learning, tenderness and charity he converted so many of them, that his life was frequently in danger from their anger. At a great Conference held at Carthage on the 1st of June, A.D. 411, and continued for three days, the death-blow was given to this heresy. The universality of the Church was maintained by St. Augustine in person ; and so great was the success of the Conference that many Donatist Bishops were converted with their whole flocks, and returned to the bosom of the Catholic Church.

St. Augustine was endowed with a singularly kind, affectionate and friendly spirit ; he was of a most tender and benevolent disposition ; stern in rebuking sinners ; hospitable, charitable and compassionate.

The Pelagian heresy exercised St. Augustine's zeal during the latter years of his life.

This was a heresy broached by a Briton named

Pelagius, a monk at Bangor, in Wales. It denied original sin, or the Church's doctrine that the sin of Adam descends on his posterity; and also stated that man was able to serve God without the assistance of His grace. St. Augustine, however, was found equal to the defence of Catholic truth in two works—the first *On the Predestination of the Saints*; the second *On the Gift of Perseverance*.

The two greatest works of St. Augustine were his *Confessions* and his *Retractations*.

The former, written about the year A.D. 397, exposes the errors of the conduct of his early life; and the latter, begun in A.D. 426, revealed the errors in his judgment. Beginning in the seventy-second year of his age, in his *Retractations* he reviews all his voluminous writings, corrects the mistakes he had fallen into, and never seeks to extenuate or excuse them.

During the latter years of his life Africa was overrun by the Vandals from Spain, under the leadership of Count Boniface. But in the midst of the calamities which this invasion brought, St. Augustine continued his labours. He lived to see the country laid desolate, Churches burnt, altars overthrown, and the faithful scattered; until in the siege of Milan, A.D. 430, overcome by his incessant labours for others' good, he calmly died as on this day, in the seventy-sixth year of his age and the fortieth of his ministry. "He made no will," writes one, "for this poor man of Christ had nothing to bequeath."¹ A general

¹ Alban Butler, on Aug. 28th.

council had been summoned by the Emperor Theodosius to meet at Ephesus, for the purpose of condemning the Nestorian heresy; and a special messenger was sent to Africa to invite St. Augustine to take part in it, but the message was too late. The Saint had departed to eternal bliss.

Here is his notice in the Martyrology :

“At Hippo-Regius, in Africa, the birthday of St. Augustine, Bishop and famous Doctor of the Church, who being converted by St. Ambrose to the Catholic faith, and by him baptized, defended the same most stoutly against the Manichees and other heretics; and after many other labours sustained for the Church of God, went finally to heaven for his own reward: whose relics were conveyed from his own city first to Sardinia, for fear of the barbarous people; and afterwards by Luitprandes, King of the Lombards, translated to Pavia, where they are still honourably kept.”





BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST:

Aug. 29th.

And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought : and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel : and the damsel gave it to her mother.—
ST. MARK vi. 27.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST was the forerunner of Jesus Christ, sent to usher Him into the world and to prepare men's hearts to receive their Redeemer. He was endowed with special graces from the Most High, by which he was prepared for his exalted office. More exalted than either prophet or legislator, he stood midway between the old law and the new.

In order to preserve the innocence of his youth and to improve his extraordinary graces, he was led by the Spirit of God to lead an austere and contemplative life in the wilderness, from his infancy till he was about thirty years of age—the usual time for priests and Levites under the old law to enter upon their office. He was foretold by Isaiah, as “the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for

our God.”¹ Malachi had borne witness of him four hundred years before his birth. “Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.”² And when he came, his message answered the description already given of him. “He came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”³ He was received as the herald of the true Messiah, and listened to by all ranks of men, even by the Pharisees, whom he sharply reproved. He was resorted to by the soldiers as well as by the publicans. He exhorted all men to works of charity and reformation of their lives, giving as a sign of these dispositions the baptism unto repentance in the waters of the River Jordan. Amongst others who received his baptism was our Saviour Himself, whom St. John Baptist knew by Divine revelation, and confessed himself unworthy to approach.

The occasion of to-day’s festival had its origin in the visit which Herod Antipas paid to Rome in A.D. 33.

On his way thither, he lodged at the house of his brother, Herod Philip, and became enamoured with his wife Herodias, who was niece to both of them. Revealing to her his passion, she consented to leave her husband Philip and marry him, on condition of his divorcing his wife, the daughter of Aretas, King of Arabia. Agreeing to this, he returned home, and considered how he might rid himself of his wife. She,

¹ Isaiah xl. 3. ² Mal. iii. 1. ³ St. Luke iii. 3.

however, getting to know of it, fled to her father. Herod Antipas now thinking himself at liberty, married his sister-in-law and niece Herodias, though her own husband Philip was yet living.

Here came in the voice of St. John Baptist, boldly rebuking vice, "It is not lawful for thee to have her."¹

Herod Antipas feared the Baptist, knowing that he was a holy and just man; but he could not bear his fault rebuked, and was offended at the liberty taken by the preacher. Herodias, however, let no opportunity slip for clamouring against the prophet and getting his life taken; so Herod, to please her, cast the Saint into prison.

His prison, we are informed, was the fortress of Machærus, upon the borders of Arabia Petraea. It was from this prison that he sent two of his disciples to the Saviour, in order that they might be assured that He was indeed the Christ, and be induced to join Him in His teaching.²

Herod, however, still preserving his respect for the Baptist, frequently sent for him and heard him gladly, though he was troubled when warned of his sins. Herodias, on the other hand, endeavoured by all means to exasperate him against the holy man; and at last found a favourable opportunity for compassing his destruction.

St. John Baptist had been a prisoner about a year, when Herod, on his birthday, gave a splendid enter-

¹ St. Matth. xiv. 4. ² *Ibid.* xi. 1, 2.

tainment in the Castle of Machærus, for the nobility of Galilee. During this entertainment, Salome, a daughter of Herodias by her own husband, came in ; and so pleased Herod by dancing, that he bid her ask any favour of him and she should have it. "And she being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry : nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel, and she brought it to her mother." ¹

Thus died St. John Baptist, the great forerunner of the Saviour, about two years and three months after his entrance upon his public ministry, and a year before our blessed Lord's crucifixion.

A remarkable testimony in favour of St. John Baptist is given by Josephus, the Jewish historian. He says : "He was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism : for that the washing of water would be acceptable to God, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away of some sins only, but for the purification of the body ; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness." ² St. John Baptist was a Prophet, Martyr and Doctor. He was declared by our Lord to be greater

¹ St. Matth. xiv. 8—13. ² *Antiq.* Bk. xviii. 5, 2.

than all the Saints of the old law, and greatest of all that have been born of women.

The crimes of Herod Antipas brought upon him his destruction ; for Aretas, in revenge for his treatment of his daughter, led his forces against him, conquered him and took the Castle of Machærus. He was deprived of his tetrarchate by Caligula ; his goods confiscated ; and he, together with Herodias, was banished into Gaul, where he died in great misery.

The head of St. John Baptist was kept at Constantinople with great honour for many years, and part of it is still preserved at Amiens.

The following notice of this day is given in the Martyrology :

“ The decollation of St. John Baptist, whom Herod, about the feast of Easter, beheaded ; though his memory be kept on this day with great solemnity, when his venerable head was found the second time ; which being afterwards translated to Rome, is there kept with great devotion by the people, in the Church of St. Silvester, near unto Campus Martius.”





GILES, AB. C.

Sept. 1st.

Deliver my soul from the sword, and my darling from the power of the dog.—Ps. xxii. 20.



T. GILES has been held in great esteem and veneration for several ages both in France and England. He was born at Athens during the seventh century, and of noble, perhaps royal descent. His wonderful piety and learning becoming known soon brought him the admiration of the world around; but finding it impossible to enjoy obscurity and retirement, he left his native country, and retired to France A.D. 666, where he chose an hermitage in a desert spot near the mouth of the Rhone, and subsequently in a forest in the diocese of Nismes.

Here he was discovered by a king of the Goths, who, being unable to prevail upon him to leave his hermitage, gave him land for a monastery A.D. 673; and for over fifty years St. Giles was its Abbot. Its constitution was approved of by Pope Benedict II., who bestowed many privileges upon it. During an incursion of the Saracens, A.D. 720, St. Giles was compelled to flee from his monastery; but returned, and died there.

Hom. L.

St. Giles is very popular in England, there being no less than one hundred and forty-six Churches dedicated in his honour. In consequence of his having suffered from a lameness of which he refused to be healed, he has become the patron of cripples. Hence we find at the gate of many towns and cities¹ a Church dedicated to him, near which beggars and cripples used to congregate to solicit alms. So much was this the rule, that before the Norman Conquest, St. Giles's, London, was the rendezvous of beggars.

¹ St. Giles's, Cripplegate, London ; also at Oxford and Cambridge.





ENURCHUS, B.

Sept. 7th.

Fight the good fight of faith.—1 TIM. vi. 12.

ST. ENURCHUS, or Evurtius, was Bishop of Orleans, in France; and was a worthy successor of St. Lucian and St. Denys in the task of converting France to the faith. He laboured in that country for more than twenty years during the fourth century; but the manner and date of his death¹ are uncertain. The place in which he was buried afterwards became a Church, and was made the cemetery of the Bishops of Orleans. An abbey there bears his name.

A dove lighting on his head while he was at Orleans was the token which marked him for election as the Bishop of the diocese.

Hence we have this notice of him in the Martyrology:

“At Orleans, in France, the deposition of St. Evertius, Bishop, who being first sub-Deacon of the Church of Rome, was afterwards, by a special favour of God, by a dove, designed Bishop of that city.”

¹ Circ. A.D. 340.



NATIVITY OF THE B. V. MARY.

Sept. 8th.

As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. —
SONG OF SOLOMON iii. 2.

THE Church of God honours the Virgin-Mother of Christ, on account of the wonderful blessings which the Incarnation of the Son brought upon the world. The birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary announced joy and salvation to a lost world; it was a mystery of holiness, made illustrious by many singular privileges. Her great dignity is expressed in the holy Gospel, in the words: "Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."¹ From this text alone is that article of the faith clearly shewn that Mary merits the title of "Theotokos," or "Deipara," by which she has ever been known in the world.

We would enquire a little into the meaning of the title.

By the term "Theotokos," or "Mother of God," the Church wishes to imply that Jesus Christ, our Lord, was very God and very Man, not ceasing to be truly God because He was born of a Virgin. Hence

indeed we may truly say with St. Paul, that the Church is redeemed with the blood of God ; because it was the very Son of God, made Man, Who shed His blood for us on the Cross.²

The heresy of Nestorius, which we referred to in our homily on Aug. 15th, was the first to deny to our Lady this title, by which she has been long known in the Church. This heresy taught that in our Lord were two persons, who were united in some casual manner : the Divine Christ dwelling in the human Saviour, as a Being occupying a temple. Thus was the hypostatic union of the Divine and human natures in our Lord's one Person denied, two Christs were imagined, one Divine and the other human ; and our Blessed Lady was described as being the Mother of the Man Jesus Christ, but not of the Son of God.³ This heresy was, however, condemned by the Church in the General Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431.

The Church, following the constant tradition of all ages, as well as the words of holy Scripture, holds, that in our Lord's one Person both the Divine and human natures subsist. Thus is Jesus Christ true God and true Man ; and our Blessed Lady is truly the Mother of God, being the Mother of our Saviour.

"For how," asks Theodore Abucara, "can we avoid calling her 'Mother of God' when she had God for her Son ?"⁴

It has even been a matter of reproach to the Church that she has done so. Nestorius himself was so clearly convicted on this point that, while he held his heresy,

he was unable to deny the fact. Thus has even error served to illustrate the truth.

Very fitting is it, that on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we should celebrate her great dignity and position in the Church of God.

"Choose," says St. Bernard, "which you will most admire, the beneficent condescension of the Son, or the sublime dignity of the Mother. On each side it is a subject of wonder and astonishment. That God should obey a woman is a humility beyond example; and that a woman commands a God is a pre-eminence without a rival."⁵

"Listen and attend, O man," says St. Anselm, "and be astonished in an ecstasy of astonishment, contemplating this prodigy. The infinite God had one only begotten coeternal Son; yet He would not suffer Him to remain only His own, but would also have Him become the only Son of Mary."⁶

But, again, Mary was not only the Theotokos, or Mother of God: she was also the Ever-Virgin. Mary was a mother, but she remained a virgin; not ceasing to be a virgin though she was the Mother of the Saviour. This was the description of her, and of her alone, in the Old Testament prophets.

"The Lord himself shall give you a sign," said Isaiah to Ahaz, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel."⁷

And, again, said Jeremiah, "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man."⁸ These two prophecies explain each other.

The unheard-of prodigy was the creation of a new thing: a virgin, remaining a virgin afterwards, encompassing a man.

Hence the title of "*Aeiparthenos*,"* *Semper Virgo* or *Ever Virgin*, is applied to Mary: and many holy Saints and Doctors¹⁰ have written in defence of this title; not, however, without opposition from various forms of error; for Elion, Cerinthus, Jovinian, Beza and others have denied this article. Some have even impiously asserted that the Blessed Virgin had other children besides our Lord.

But the words of Ezekiel the prophet apply to the Blessed Virgin: "Then said the Lord unto me, This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince, he shall sit in it, to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter in by the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same."¹¹

St. Jerome tells us that among the Jews "the first-born son" means the first son, whether any other children followed or not; he tells us that his predecessors in the faith of Christ—*e.g.* St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp, St. Irenæus, St. Justin, and others—all believed in Mary's perpetual virginity.

St. Epiphanius is very earnest in refuting the error of the Antidicomarianites of his day, adding that no one ever spoke of Mary without adding the title of Virgin.

St. Ambrose, speaking of her as a model for Christian women to follow, says : " Let the virgin life of Mary be set before you as it were in a looking-glass, in which is seen the pattern of chastity and the beauty of virtue. . . . The first spur to learning is the nobility of the master. What is more noble than the Mother of God ? . . . A virgin she was in body and mind, whose integrity was incapable of deceit and disguise, she was humble in heart, grave in words, prudent in mind, speaking little, assiduous in reading, placing her hope not in uncertain riches but in the prayers of the poor. Employed always, she would have no other witness of her heart but God alone ; injured none, wished well to all, honoured her superiors, envied not her equals, shunned vain glory, followed reason, loved virtue. . . . Her looks were sweet, her discourse mild and behaviour modest, her actions had nothing unbecoming or savouring of levity, her voice nothing of assurance. Temperate in her diet, her charities knew no bounds." ¹²

And to the same purpose writes Bishop Taylor : " She was full of grace and excellencies ; and God poured upon her a full measure of honour, in making her the Mother of the Messias, for the angel came to her and said, ' Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou among women.' " ¹³

The Sacramentary of St. Gregory the Great contains an office for this festival, and it is supposed that it has been observed in the Church ever since A.D.

695, and in England ever since A.D. 994. In the time of St. Bernard its observance was universal.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is known by various titles in the Church; and amongst others by that of "Star of the Sea," which is only the interpretation of her Jewish name Miriam.

To the Undivided Trinity, God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three Persons in One God, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

NOTES.

¹ St. Matth. i. 16.

² Acts xx. 28.

³ "Wherefore from these three, a true conception, nutrition and parturition, we must acknowledge that the Blessed Virgin was truly and properly the Mother of the Saviour. As so she is frequently styled the Mother of Jesus in the language of the Evangelists, and by Elizabeth particularly (St. Luke i. 43) the Mother of her Lord, as also by the general consent of the Church (because he which was so born of her was God), the Deipara, which being a compound title, begun in the Greek Church, was resolved into its parts by the Latins, and so the Virgin was plainly named the Mother of God."—Bp. Pearson, *On the Creed*.

"Q. Why is the Blessed Virgin styled the Mother of God?

"A. Because the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Son of God, by virtue of an eternal Generation, vouchsafed to descend from heaven, and to stoop so low as to enter into the womb of the Virgin, where, being united to our nature, which was formed and conceived there, he submitted to a second Generation according to the Flesh. So that this Son of God was truly the Son of the Virgin, and consequently she that brought

forth the Man, was really the Mother of God, and by her cousin Elizabeth she is styled the Mother of her Lord, which word Lord was accounted equivalent to the word God."—Robert Nelson, *Companion to the Festivals*, chap. xiv.

⁴ *Disput.* 14.

⁵ *Sermon super Missus est*, i. 7, Opp. par. 735.

⁶ Abp. of Cant. A.D. 1093, v. *Monologium*.

⁷ Is. vii. 14.

⁸ Jer. xxxi. 22.

⁹ "Thirdly, we believe the Mother of our Lord to have been not only before and after his nativity, but also for ever, the most immaculate and Blessed Virgin. For although it may be thought sufficient as to the mystery of the Incarnation that, when our Saviour was conceived and born, his Mother was a Virgin; though whatsoever should have followed after could have no reflective operation upon the first-fruit of her womb; though there be no further mention in the Creed than that he was born of the Virgin Mary; yet the peculiar eminency and unparalleled privilege of that Mother, the special honour and reverence due unto that Son, and ever paid by her, the regard of that Holy Ghost who came upon her, and the power of the Highest which overshadowed her, the singular goodness and piety of Joseph, to whom she was espoused, have persuaded the Church of God in all ages to believe that she still continued in the same virginity, and therefore is to be accounted the 'Ever Virgin' Mary."—Bp. Pearson, *On the Creed*.

¹⁰ e.g. St. Jerome, *Contra Helvid*; St. Epiphanius, *Haer.* 78.

¹¹ Ezek. xlv. 2, 3.

¹² *De Virgin.* ii. cap. 2, 6—8.

¹³ *Life of our Lord*, p. i., sec. 1.



HOLY CROSS DAY.

Sept. 14th.

A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me.—
SONG OF SOLOMON i. 13.

THE feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was instituted in A.D. 335, in honour of the elevation of the Cross, in the Church which the Emperor Constantine erected at Jerusalem. On the previous day A.D. 335 this Church was consecrated, in the presence of the Bishops who had assisted at the Council of Tyre; and on Sept. 14th in that year the veneration of that sacred relic took place. This feast has been observed ever since that event.

We explained in our homily for May 3rd, that part of the Cross on which our Saviour suffered was placed by St. Helena in the Basilica which Constantine built at Jerusalem for its preservation; another portion was sent to Constantinople; and the third, together with the title which was placed over our Saviour's head, was sent to a Church in Rome. It is with the first of these three pieces that we are concerned to-day.

Three centuries after this portion of the Cross had been laid up in the Basilica at Jerusalem, the Persians, under their King Chosroes, crossed the Jordan, A.D. 614, and made themselves masters of Palestine. They took Jerusalem, and behaved with great barbarity, slaughtering priests, monks, nuns, and all Christians, and sold them into slavery. They burnt the Churches, even that of the Holy Sepulchre, and carried away all the holy vessels, and the portion of the Cross which Helena had left there.

This barbarous tyrant was, however, overthrown by Heraclius the Emperor, Dec. 12th, A.D. 627; and Chosroes II. perished at the hands of his own son, whom he had barbarously endeavoured to deprive of the crown. All the prisoners which had been taken, including Zacharias, Patriarch of Constantinople, were restored; and this portion of the Cross was taken to Constantinople.

In the beginning of spring, A.D. 629, Heraclius translated it to Jerusalem and restored it to its place of honour. But it is related that as the Emperor was entering the city, clad in his royal robes and carrying the Cross on his shoulders, he found the gates closed against him, and himself unable to proceed further. The Patriarch Zacharias, who walked beside him, suggested that his pomp did not seem agreeable to the humble appearance which Christ made when He bore His Cross along the way of sorrow. The Emperor immediately laid aside his robes, and was able to enter the city. Entering bare foot with the pro-

cession, he devoutly replaced the Cross, enclosed in its case, where it had before reposed. The exaltation and veneration of this precious relic then again took place, and from that time has been observed in the East with great devotion.

It is believed that during the retreat of Heraclius the Emperor, before the Mohammedans A.D. 635, this relic was taken to Constantinople, divided into parts, and portions sent to different parts of the world.

The praises of the Holy Cross have been sung in many of the hymns of the Church, such as the *Vexilla Regis* and *Pange Lingua*. It has been believed from ancient times, that at the last day it will appear in the heavens, going before the great Judge of all men.¹

The use of the sign of the Cross as the great mark of the Christian name—in sacred actions, on sacred vestments, and also in the celebration of the Sacraments—is well known amongst Christians of all ages. Thus has the Cross of shame become the Christian's joy and glory.

We have denoted the Cross in our text by the metaphor of "a bundle of myrrh," which signifies present suffering. But though the Cross was the instrument of the Passion, it has become the means of human deliverance. Rightly is it thus used in the Litany: "By thine Agony and bloody Sweat; by thy Cross and Passion; by thy precious Death and Burial; by

¹ Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.—
St. Matth. xxiv. 30.

thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension ; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, Good Lord, deliver us."

We may now rejoice in the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, for he has said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."¹

To God be glory for ever.

¹ Gal. vi. 14.





LAMBERT, B. M.

Sept. 17th.

Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.—
ST. MATTH. v. 5.

ST. LAMBERT was the son of a rich and noble Christian family of Maestricht. He was instructed from early youth in sacred learning, and committed to the care of St. Theodard, Bishop of his native place.

On the assassination of this Bishop by some persons who had usurped the possessions of his Church, St. Lambert was chosen, A.D. 669, to succeed to the office, and devoted himself to his duties with much ardour. A revolution occurring, in which Childeric, King of France, was dethroned and murdered by his noblemen, A.D. 673, St. Lambert, as a favourite of that Prince, was driven into exile, and his see occupied by another. He retired to the monastery of Stavelo, where he spent seven years in monastic seclusion.

In course of time St. Lambert and other banished prelates were restored to their sees, and our Saint returned with fresh ardour to his duties, which he discharged with wonderful zeal. St. Lambert did much for the conversion of Friesland to the faith.

Hom. LIV.

The disturbances of the times were also the occasion of this good Bishop's death. Two brothers, who had become insupportable by their repeated acts of violence, had been slain by some relations of the Saint. Thereupon a kinsman of theirs, named Dodd, resolved to avenge their death upon the innocent Bishop, who was attacked at a small village, which is now the city of Liège. St. Lambert had retired to rest when Dodd and his troop broke into the house. He refused to defend himself, but prostrated himself on the ground with his arms extended in the form of a cross. Praying with many tears, he was transfixed with a dart, and all his company slain. Sept. 17th, A.D. 709.

St. Lambert held his bishopric altogether for forty years. His death has been considered a martyrdom. His body was sent to Maestricht, and a Church built over the place where he was slain, whither his relics were translated A.D. 721.

Liège became an episcopal see, and St. Lambert is still the patron of the City. Some of the Saint's relics are still preserved at Maestricht.

St. Lambert was a man of singularly holy and simple life, bold in rebuking vice ; and he compassed the conversion of many Pagans by his patient, loving zeal.

The Martyrology thus commends him :

“ At Liège, of St. Lambert, Bishop of Maestricht, who out of zeal reprehending certain abuses in the King's court, was for that cause slain by certain wicked men, and so entered into the court of heaven, there to live for ever.”



CYPRIAN, ABP. M.

Sept. 26th.

He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. —

REV. ii. 11.

ST. CYPRIAN, Archbishop of Carthage, was descended from a noble family of that city, of which his father was a Senator. He was brought up in Paganism, and was advanced in years before he knew anything of the teaching of Christ.

His conversion to Christianity was due, under God, to a holy Priest at Carthage named Caecilius, with whom he became acquainted, and whom St. Cyprian revered ever after as a father and guardian. After his conversion he applied himself eagerly to the study of the Scriptures, finding God's goodness, love and mercy abundantly set forth therein. After his baptism he sold all his goods and distributed them to the poor.

Becoming acquainted with the writings of the Fathers, he paid particular attention to Tertullian, whom he called "his Master," admiring his genius and learning, but avoiding his errors. His life, which was much disturbed by the derisions of his Pagan friends, was spent in retirement and penitence, inso-

Hom. LV.

much that while he was yet in the ranks of the Neophytes,¹ he was chosen and advanced to the dignity of the priesthood. He did not, however, remain long in this order, for within a year of his ordination he was advanced to the Bishopric of Carthage, on the death of Donatus, A.D. 248.

For more than a year after his consecration the Church at Carthage enjoyed peace, but on the accession of Decius persecution began. The decree against Christianity reached Carthage in the beginning of A.D. 250, and had scarcely been made public before the idolaters in a confused and seditious manner ran in crowds into the market-place, shouting, "Cyprian to the lions!" "Cyprian to the wild beasts!" The Saint was publicly proscribed by the name of "Caecilius Cyprian, Bishop of the Christians:" and every one was forbidden to conceal either him or his goods. Warned however by divine injunction, he sought safety in flight, and entrusted the safety of his flock to his Bishops and Priests.

During this fearful persecution of the Church the number of those who fell away from the Christian name was very terrible; but on the cessation of the persecution with the death of Decius, St. Cyprian returned to Carthage, April, A.D. 251.

During his two years' absence the schism of Novatus and Felicissimus had taken place, and also the controversy about the absolution and public reception of those who had lapsed. Against the efforts of these schismatics St. Cyprian directed his energies with

zeal, writing several letters, and warning his flock against them. On his return he assembled a Synod of Bishops, by which the schisms were condemned, and those who had lapsed were ordered to remain in a course of penance. Here also he read his famous treatise, *On the Lapsed*, which was now published, and still remains amongst his works.

In A.D. 252 there were signs of a fresh persecution ; and the Saint, forewarned of God, thus wrote to his flock. "A more severe and fiercer struggle," he says, "now hangs over us, to which the soldiers of Christ must prepare themselves by faith untainted, and by sturdy courage ; considering that they therefore daily drink the cup of the blood of Christ, that they too may be able to shed their blood for Christ. For this is to desire to be found with Christ, to imitate what Christ both taught and did."²

In the interval arose the controversy about the validity of baptism by heretics, in which St. Cyprian, holding a somewhat rigorous opinion, decided that such baptisms were invalid. On this point a wiser rule has since prevailed in the Church, viz., that such baptisms were valid, if made with water and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

In A.D. 257 the eighth general persecution of the Church began, in which Pope Cornelius was the first to suffer Confessorship by being banished.

St. Cyprian, in his 60th Epistle, wrote to congratulate him, and shortly afterwards the martyrdom of Cornelius took place.³

On the election of his successor, St. Lucius, Cyprian wrote him a letter of congratulation. St. Lucius was, however, no sooner elected than he was banished, and being recalled, died within five months of his election.

In A.D. 257 St. Cyprian was apprehended and brought before Galerius, the governor, and on his refusal to renounce Christianity was banished to Curubis, a small town about fifty miles from Carthage, where he waited in daily expectation of violent death. A year, however, elapsed before his sentence came, during which he heard of the martyrdom of Pope Xystus.⁴ On his being again examined, and refusing to renounce the faith, he was beheaded, September 14th, A.D. 258. His body was buried by night in a field on the Mappalian way. Two Churches were built near Carthage in his honour; one, called Mensa Cypriani, stood on the spot where he triumphed; the other, called Mappalia, covered his tomb.

St. Cyprian thus witnessed two persecutions, that of Decius, A.D. 250, and that under Galerius, the eighth general persecution, A.D. 257.

The works of St. Cyprian are very numerous, full of orthodoxy and piety, and have always been highly esteemed in the Church.

He is thus mentioned in the Martyrology (Sept. 14th), together with Cornelius:

“At Rome, in the way Appia, of St. Cornelius, Pope and Martyr, who in the persecution of Decius, after he had been banished, was commanded to be

beaten with leaden whips, and after, with one-and-twenty others, men and women, beheaded. . . . In Africa, the passage of St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, very famous for his sanctity and learning, who under the Emperors Valerian and Gallienus, after a hard banishment, was beheaded six miles from Carthage, near to the sea, and so accomplished his martyrdom."

NOTES.

¹ *i.e.* those who had only lately received Holy Baptism.

² Epistle 58, *Oxf. Lib. of Fathers*, sec. 1.

³ Sept. 14th.

⁴ Aug. 6th, A.D. 258.





JEROME, PR. C. D.

Sept. 30th.

Many shall commend his understanding ; and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out : his memorial shall not depart away, and his name shall live from generation to generation.—ECCLUS. xxxix. 9.

ST. JEROME, the most learned of all the Early Fathers, was born at Stridonium, a small town in Pannonia, of good family, A.D. 342, and educated in literature both in his native town and at Rome.

He became master of Greek and Latin at an early age, and for some time pleaded at the bar.

During his travels throughout Gaul he pursued his studies with much ardour, considerably improving himself with St. Hilary's work *On Synods* and his *Commentaries on the Psalms*, works which he copied with his own hand. Going to Aquileia, a city of which St. Valerian was Bishop, he formed the acquaintance and friendship of many of the most holy and celebrated ecclesiastics of the time, especially with Rufinus at the monastery of Aquileia.

The Saint, however, returned to Rome after a

Hom. LVI.

while, and devoted himself wholly to his studies and to retirement. He received holy baptism about this period, and left for Antioch, in order to devote himself for four years to prayer, study and retirement in the wilderness of Chalcis in Syria. It was during this period that he learnt the Hebrew language; and also, while he was suffering from a fever, that he saw in a vision, our Lord standing on His throne to judge the world. Here on being asked what he was, St. Jerome replied that he was a Christian. "Thou liest," said the Judge, "thou art a Ciceronian, for the works of that author possess thy heart." He seemed then to be scourged by angels, and took it as a reproof of his excessive love of the classics, whose study he forthwith renounced.

When he was twenty-nine years old he was ordained Priest by Paulinus, Patriarch of Antioch, A.D. 377. Shortly afterwards he visited Palestine, making Bethlehem his home, and perfecting himself in his knowledge of the geography of the country and in the Hebrew language.

About A.D. 380 St. Jerome went to Constantinople to study the holy Scriptures under St. Gregory Nazianzen, who was then Bishop of that city; and on his master leaving Constantinople in the following year the Saint returned to Palestine, and shortly afterwards went to Rome.

Here he was received everywhere with love and esteem, on account of his holiness of life, humility, learning and eloquence. Many clergy, noblemen and

monks sought his instructions in holy Scripture, and he became the guardian of many virgins and others who sought the religious life. He spent three years in Rome in this manner, when he resolved to return to the east. Embarking at Ponto, in August, A.D. 385, attended only by Paulinian and Vincent, he landed at Cyprus and visited St. Epiphanius. At Antioch he visited the Bishop Paulinus; and arrived at Jerusalem towards the end of the year. Next year he visited Egypt and Palestine, and then returned to Bethlehem, where he founded a monastery, a nunnery and a hospital.

At Bethlehem, A.D. 416, he and his solitaries suffered much from the assaults of barbarians, who set fire to the buildings and savagely murdered the monks and nuns.

At length, after a long and laborious life, St. Jerome died September 30th, A.D. 420, and was buried in the ruins of his monastery at Bethlehem. His body was subsequently transferred to the Church of St. Mary Major at Rome.

St. Gregory the Great, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine of Hippo and St. Jerome are called the four Doctors of the Church, and are by some persons likened to the four carpenters whom the prophet Zechariah saw in his vision. "And the Lord showed me four carpenters. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns

of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it.”¹

By them has God been especially pleased to defend the doctrines of His Church from the assaults of heresy and atheism. Like the four Evangelists, the four Doctors of the Church have laboured with their pens to teach, instruct, edify and sanctify all who really wish to learn of the truths of God. All the errors of the times they lived in were confuted and destroyed by the efforts of these holy and learned men. As St. Augustine taught of the grace of God and man's free will, so St. Ambrose has taught us in sweetness, benignity, affection and charity, of the blessedness of the state of holy virginity, after the pattern of the Ever-Virgin Mother of God.

St. Jerome, pursuing the same course, was the greatest of all the Doctors in expounding the divine oracles of the holy Scriptures. In translating holy Scripture, Pope Clement VIII. said of him “that he was divinely assisted and inspired.” Hebrew, Greek and Latin versions of the Scriptures were studied by him and have received the benefit of his laborious life. The Latin version of the Old and New Testaments, called the Vulgate, was his special work, and continues to this day one of our most valuable versions of the Bible.

St. Jerome was in constant war with the heresies of his time. Satan was as active then as now in polluting the truths of the Church of God. Amongst

¹ Zech. i. 20, 21.

other erroneous opinions which were then current, St. Jerome refuted the heresy of Helvidius, A.D. 384, and of Jovinian; proving in his work against the former that Mary continued Ever-Virgin, and against the latter, that holy virginity is of great merit, and to be embraced for the sake of virtue; and shewing the holiness of the married state for the generality of mankind, though he did not condemn second or even third marriages.

Against Vigilantius, who had denied that any respect was to be shewn to relics, he wrote a treatise, in which he says, "We do not adore the relics of the martyrs, but we honour them, that we may adore Him whose martyrs they are. We honour the servants, that the respect which is paid to them may be reflected back on the Lord."¹

But his greatest contest was with the errors of Origen.

No one honoured Origen more than St. Jerome: no one made greater use of his writings. But finding out the evil that was being wrought by the use of his name, in support of various errors, he joined with St. Epiphanius in resisting them. Denial of the eternity of the torments of hell (or, to use more modern language, the denial of everlasting punishment); the assertion of the pre-existence of souls; the statement of the plurality of worlds succeeding one another for

¹ "Honoramus autem reliquias martyrum, ut Eum cujus sicut martyres adoremus."—St. Jerome, *Ep. CIX. Ad Riparium* (tom. i. par. 725).

all eternity, were this man's chief errors, which St. Jerome ably combated and refuted.

Unwearied diligence, a spirit of penitence, profound learning, austerity of life, zeal and devotion to God were the chief characteristics of this great Saint, Confessor and Doctor. St. Jerome was the only one of the four Doctors of the Church who remained Priest. All the others were Bishops.

Our Saint is usually represented as a hermit in the desert.

He is especially a Doctor of the Latin Church.¹

Lastly, to complete our comparison of the four Doctors of the Church, St. Gregory teaches us the duties of the pastoral office, and sets forth in his work on the Book of Job the principles of a holy life. "The Apostle of England"—inasmuch as he sent over St. Augustine to our shores—he has taught us strains of holy music, specially dear to the Church's true sons, in the plain song or Gregorian tones, which will ever be the Church's own solemn and stately form of addressing God, and singing the divine praises.

St. Jerome is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

"At Bethlehem Juda, the deposition of St. Jerome, Priest, and Doctor of the Church, who, excelling in all kind of learning, and a diligent imitator of the most approved monks, having with the sword of his doctrine slain many monsters of heresies, at length,

¹ Oderunt eum haeretici, qui eos impugnare non desiit, oderunt clerici, qui vitam eorum insectatur et crimina, sed plane boni omnes et mirantur et diligunt. Jacob. De Vorag. cap. cxlvi.

in a very old age, went to rest in peace, and was buried at the manger of our Lord ; whose body, being afterwards brought to Rome, was honourably placed in the Church of St. Mary Major."

In his private life St. Jerome was a very model of austerity and penitence. Grave and charitable, laborious to the very last, he applied himself to the study of the Scriptures. The words of our text are surely true of this great Doctor : "Many shall commend his understanding ; and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out : his memorial shall not depart away, and his name shall endure from generation to generation."





REMIGIUS, ABP. C., *The Apostle of France.* Oct. 1st.

Being ensamples to the flock.—1 ST. PETER v. 3.

ST. REMIGIUS, the great Apostle of the French nation, was born A.D. 439, descended from noble parents, who enjoyed an affluent fortune and condition suitable to their rank, at Laon, in that country. He had two brothers, Principius, Bishop of Soissons, and another whose name is unknown, but who became father to St. Lupus, a successor of his uncle, in the see of Soissons.

The Saint became remarkable in his early youth for his great knowledge, extraordinary devotion and piety, as well as for the severity of his morals. He is described as having been tall, over seven feet in height, with an open countenance, aquiline nose, thick beard and stately walk. His election to the see of Rheims took place under singular circumstances, when the Saint was only twenty-two years of age. Happening to be in the Church at Rheims when the clergy and people were assembled to choose a Bishop, a ray of sun, striking through a small cleristery window, fell on his head. In the darkness of the edifice the

Hom. LVII.

handsome face of the young noble so shone out, that the people at once chose him by acclamation ; and, though the appointment was much opposed by himself, he was consecrated to the Archbishopric, A.D. 459.

In this new dignity he occupied himself in prayer and meditation on the holy Scriptures, instructing the people, and undertaking the conversion of sinners and unbelievers.

St. Apollinaris Sidonius, a native of Lyons, having become possessed of a MS. volume of his sermons, speaks of them as invaluable treasures. He says that he especially admired the loftiness of thought, the judicious choice of epithets, the gracefulness and propriety of figures, and the justness, strength and closeness of the reasoning, which he compared to the vehemence of thunder. The words flowed like a gentle river, but every part of each discourse was so naturally connected, and the style so smooth and even, that the whole carried with it an irresistible force. He compared the delicacy and beauty of the thoughts and expression to the surface of the smoothest ice, upon which a nail might run without meeting with the least unevenness. St. Gregory of Tours relates that he was a man of great knowledge, imbued with love of rhetorical studies, and so illustrious for his sanctity as to equal St. Silvester.

About A.D. 496 it is related that the French nation, over which Clovis had reigned for fifteen years, was attacked by some German tribes near Tolbiac (the modern Zulpich), between Aix and Cologne. The

battle was raging, the Franks wavering, and King Clovis saw the whole weight of the conflict fell on his cavalry. Seeing the case desperate, he remembered the parting words of Queen Clotilda to him, and cried out with much emotion : " Christ Jesus, Thou whom my Queen Clotilda calleth the Son of the living God, I have invoked my own gods, and find them giving me no help. I believe that they have no power, since they aid me not. Thee, my God and Lord, I invoke : if Thou give me victory over my foes, I will believe in Thee and be baptized in Thy name." No sooner had he uttered this prayer, than his scattered forces began to rally round him, the battle was renewed with fresh vigour, and the general of the enemy being slain, the rest threw down their arms and surrendered to Clovis.

On the return of King Clovis, his Queen sent for St. Remigius, and prayed him to come and penetrate the King's heart with the words of salvation. At that time the King had with him St. Vedast, a holy Priest of Toul, who spent a retired life in that city : and the King was instructed and prepared for holy baptism by these two Saints. Many of his subjects followed the King's example ; and the following description of his baptism is given us by Abp. Hincmar, in the *Life of St. Remigius* which he compiled. " The Bishop," he says, " went in search of the King at early morning to his bed-chamber, in order that, taking him at the moment of freedom from secular cares, he might more freely communicate to him the mysteries of the

divine word. The King's Chamberlains receive him with great respect, and the King runs forward to meet him. Thereupon they pass together into an oratory dedicated to St. Peter, chief of the Apostles, and adjoining the King's apartment. When the Bishop, King and Queen had taken their places on the seats prepared for them, and admission had been given to some clerks and also to some friends and household servants of the King, the venerable Bishop began his instructions on the subject of salvation. Meanwhile preparations are being made along the road from the palace to the baptistery: curtains and valuable stuffs are hung up; the houses on both sides the streets are dressed out; the baptistery is sprinkled with balm and all manner of perfume. The procession moves from the palace; the clergy lead the way with the holy Gospels, the cross, and the banners, singing hymns and canticles; then comes the Bishop leading the King by the hand; after him the Queen; lastly, the people. . . . After having confessed the symbol of the orthodox faith, the Bishop was plunged thrice into the water of baptism, in the Name of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and the blessed Prelate received and consecrated the King with the divine unction."

After the baptism of King Clovis, St. Remigius baptized the King's sister and three thousand men of the French army. Out of the lands which the King gave were endowed the sees of Laon, Tournay, Arras and Cambray, together with many parochial

Churches. St. Remigius survived King Clovis twenty-two years, and died during the joint reign of the King's four sons, on Jan. 12th, A.D. 533, in the ninety-fourth year of his age and the seventieth of his episcopacy. The Saint's body was buried at St. Christopher's Church, Rheims, and translated to the Benedictine Abbey of St. Remi in that city, Oct. 1st, A.D. 1049.

St. Remigius is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

"At Rheims, in France, of St. Remigius, Bishop and Confessor, who converted the Frenchmen to Christ, and baptized and instructed in the faith Clodoveus,¹ their King: and when he had been Bishop for many years, renowned for holiness and miracles, departed this life upon the thirteenth day of January, but his feast is kept on this day, when his holy body was afterwards translated." (Oct. 1st.)

This faithful Saint and Bishop was never weary of watching for his flock. He continually prayed, watched, exhorted, and preached; mourning for the erring, and ever watching for the safety of his people. He fed the flock of God which was around him, "taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind."² Neither as a lord "over God's heritage," but an example to the flock.

¹ *i.e.* Clovis.

² See 1 Peter v. 2, 3.



FAITH, V. M.

Oct. 6th.

The memory of the just is blessed.—PROV. x. 7.

AMONG those Christians who suffered martyrdom under Dacian, Governor of Spain in the time of Diocletian and Maximian, was St. Faith, of Agen, in Aquitania.

Descended of a noble family, her reputation reached the ears of the governor, who summoned her to his tribunal, and ordered her to renounce her faith in Jesus Christ. In answer to his command she only signed herself with the cross in different parts of her body, and uttered this prayer: "Lord Jesus, who art always ready to assist Thy servants, fortify me in this hour, and enable me to answer in a worthy manner."

Endeavouring to assume mildness of manner, the Governor asked the Virgin her name. She replied that her name was Faith, and that she endeavoured to support in reality what her name implied. "What is your religion?" asked Dacian. "I have from my infancy served Christ," she replied, "and to Him I have consecrated my whole soul."

Dacian then tried to make her renounce her faith,

Hom. LVIII.

and sacrifice to Diana. On her replying that the divinities of the Gentiles were devils, and that she could not sacrifice to them, Dacian, furious with rage, again ordered her, under sentence of instant torture, to sacrifice. But calling to mind the courage of the Martyrs, and the glorious crown promised to those who persevere, she replied that she was prepared to suffer every torment for Christ, and that she was impatient to die for Him.

More enraged than ever, Dacian ordered her to be bound with chains on a brazen grate, and a huge fire to be kindled beneath her. She endured her torment with great fortitude, while the executioners raked up coal and fat around her. So she died. The bystanders, struck with pity, exclaimed, "How can the tyrant thus torment an innocent girl for worshipping God?" Whereupon numbers of them were apprehended; and refusing to sacrifice to the false gods, were beheaded with St. Faith.

The crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, is dedicated in her honour, and at one time contained portions of her relics; her head is still at Agen. She is represented in art as a maiden, with a palm-branch and a grate.

Her life teaches us the force of good example. At the sight of her constancy the witnesses of her martyrdom arrived at a similar reward. How can we read the lives of so many of God's faithful servants without being moved to contrition for our sins, and compunction for our faults?

She is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

“ At Agen, in France, the birthday of St. Faith, Virgin and Martyr, by whose example blessed Caprasius, encouraged to martyrdom, happily accomplished his agony.”





DENYS, B. M.

Oct. 9th.

Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.—ST. LUKE xii. 8.

THE mention of St. Denys, or Dionysius, leads us to consider the work through which God was pleased to lead the French nation to the knowledge of His truth. The Patron of France must not, however, be confounded with Dionysius the Areopagite, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles,¹ and who was converted by the preaching of St. Paul.

St. Denys of France, contemporary of Gratian, the first Bishop of Tours, was sent into Gaul during the third century; and continued the work which had been begun by Crescens, a disciple of St. Paul, aided probably by St. Luke, and extended by the efforts of St. Irenæus.

St. Denys fixed his seat at Paris; founded the four sees of Chartres, Sculis, Meaux and Cologne; and finally suffered martyrdom in the persecution of Vale-

¹ Acts xvii. 34.

rian, A.D. 272. The Acts of his martyrdom relate that after a long imprisonment, he was beheaded for the faith, together with Rusticus, a Priest, and Eleutherius, a Deacon. The bodies of these Martyrs were thrown into the Seine, but were recovered ; and an abbey was afterwards erected on the spot where they were buried. Some relics of these three Saints are preserved there. St. Denys is represented in art as a Bishop, holding his head in his hands ; and sometimes also with a sword.

In contemplating the lives of those Apostolic men who have filled the world with the knowledge of God, we cannot fail to admire the graces with which these men were filled, when they regarded nothing but God's glory and the salvation of souls. Like the Master whom Christ's disciples follow, they had no aim or object but to advance the divine honour. Dead they were to the world, and to themselves. In losing their lives for the sake of their Master, they laid up for themselves a great crown of life, and they laid the foundations of that work which has resulted in our knowledge of the truth.

The Martyrology makes the mistake of confounding St. Denys with the Dionysius above mentioned ; an error which was first committed in consequence of the selection of that passage of the Acts for the Epistle of the day. Hence the history of St. Denys, having become somewhat confused, is obscure and uncertain.



TRANSLATION OF EDWARD, K. C.

Oct. 13th.

The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.—Ps. xxxvii. 30.

KING EDWARD the Confessor was the son of King Ethelred II., whom he succeeded on the throne of England on Easter Day, A.D. 1042, in the fortieth year of his age.

For years between his father's death in 1016 and his accession to the throne, England had been much vexed by the incursions of the Danes; and Canute, Harold his son, and Hardicanute had occupied as much of the kingdom as force of arms, stratagem, or other means could procure for them. But at length, to the great joy of the whole nation, after tyranny, war, and bloodshed had reigned, St. Edward was anointed and crowned.

Though he ascended the throne in the midst of times of commotion and distraction, there has never been in England a reign more blessed or more happy. A pious prince, "modest in his comportment, and sparing in words," addicted to prayer, attendance at the daily sacrifice and the society of holy men, he was loved, feared and respected by all his subjects.

Hom. LX.

He appointed Earl Godwin his chief adviser, and in January, A.D. 1045, married Godwin's daughter Edith.

Having in early life made a vow of performing a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Peter at Rome, he was determined to put it into execution ; but his intention met with so great opposition from his people that he was compelled to desist from his undertaking. Pope Leo IX., however, in releasing him from his vow, ordered him to spend on the poor the money which he would have devoted to his journey, and to build a great Church and monastery in honour of St. Peter. Hence arose the Abbey Church of St. Peter, Westminster, where the sovereigns of England are crowned.

In accepting this account of the rise of Westminster Abbey, we must not, however, forget that Sebert, King of the East Angles and nephew of St. Ethelbert, founded the Cathedral of St. Paul in London ; and also—according to some authors—a monastery in honour of St. Peter, called Thorney, which is mentioned in a charter of King Offa in A.D. 785.

On this little monastery being destroyed by the Danes, it was rebuilt by King Edgar. The good King Edward restored this monastery on a magnificent scale, created it an abbey, and obtained various privileges for it from Pope Nicholas II. in A.D. 1059. The abbey was afterwards rebuilt by King Henry III. and subsequently converted into a collegiate Church.

In the year 1066, notwithstanding the troubles and commotions of the times, St. Edward held a court at Westminster, and dedicated the abbey with great

pomp to the Prince of the Apostles ; the good King was, however, unable to be present at the dedication festival in consequence of illness. He, however, gave a ring which he wore to the Abbot of Westminster ; and on Jan. 5th, A.D. 1066, calmly expired, in the sixty-fourth year of his age and the twenty-fourth year of his reign. He was buried the next day in Westminster Abbey, and canonized by Pope Alexander III. in the year 1161.

Two years afterwards his body was taken up and solemnly translated as on this day, by St. Thomas-a-Becket, in the presence of King Henry II., and of many Bishops and Abbots.

By a national Council held at Oxford in A.D. 1222, his day was ordered to be kept throughout England as a holy day. King Edward the Confessor is the representative Saint and Patron of the English people : his body still reposes in a tomb in Westminster Abbey.

St. Edward the Confessor was a mild and gentle King, addicted to peace, a noble and consistent Christian, living in the midst of degenerate times. Out of the existing codes of laws of his time he compiled a fresh body, with additions and emendations, which was further ratified by William the Conqueror. His disposition and temperament were humane : his charities bounteous. Humble, modest and peace-loving, he was beloved by his subjects, and fairly earned the title of Saint. His example shews us how a Christian may by vigilance, temperance and careful-

ness preserve holiness, and acquire virtues. By God's grace he may perfect patience, meekness, humility and charity, and live under a sense of his duties to God.

In his life, early education and material circumstances, he may be described as a brother "born for adversity."¹

¹ Prov. xvii. 17.





ETHELDREDA, V.

Oct. 17th.

For they are virgins.—REV. xiv. 4.

ST. ETHELDREDA, or Awdry, was descended of a royal race of East Anglia, born at Exnynge,¹ in Suffolk, and brought up in the fear of God. She was married early to Tombert, Prince of the Gyrwians, and again after his death, to Egfrid, King of Northumberland.

By Prince Tombert she had been endowed with considerable possessions about the neighbourhood of Ely, which place was then an island, and celebrated for the eels which abounded in its waters.

After twelve years of virgin life spent with Egfrid, she retired, by the advice of St. Wilfrid, to the monastery of Coldingham, near Berwick, where she lived under the Abbess, St. Ebba: but being pursued by the King, she fled in disguise to the Isle of Ely, where she founded a monastery and nunnery, spending her life there in great austerity. After a lingering illness, in which she suffered much from a swelling in her neck, she died June 23rd, A.D. 679, and was

¹ Some say the village of Exning in Cambridgeshire.

buried in a coffin of wood. Her sister Sexburga, who succeeded her in the government of the nunnery, caused her relics to be preserved in a stone coffin, and translated into the Church, Oct. 17th, A.D. 695.

The monastery was destroyed by the Danes in the year 870, but was rebuilt by Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and St. Awdry in A.D. 970. In A.D. 1108 it became the seat of a Bishopric.

St. Etheldreda was a model of the state of life mentioned in the text.

How holy that pure state is in God's sight is evident from this chapter of the Revelation of St. John the Divine. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."¹

Though twice married, she continued in that pure state, and preserved her virginity for God.

¹ Rev. xiv. 4, 5.





CRISPIN, M.

Oct. 25th.

Working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.—EPH. iv. 28.

THE name of St. Crispin is usually joined with that of Crispinian, his brother, who came from Rome to preach the faith in Gaul about the middle of the third century.

They were descended from a noble family, and coming into Gaul, fixed their habitation at Soissons, where, in imitation of St. Paul, they worked with their hands by night making shoes, and preached Christ crucified during the day.

They led this life for several years, converting many to Christ, until, in A.D. 284, a complaint being lodged against them, the Emperor gave them over to Rictiovarus, his Prefect, for punishment. Before this inhuman enemy of the Christian faith they behaved with great constancy, and were finally beheaded after torture in A.D. 287.

Their bodies were buried where the Church of St. Crispin-le-Petit was afterwards built: and at Soissons it is customary at Rogation-tide for the procession to pass along the Rue de la Congregation, and to chant a short Office before a house which occupies the site

of this old Chapel. Their bodies were translated to the Church of St. Laurence at Rome, and afterwards into Westphalia, where the festival is observed on June 20th.

From St. Crispin and his companion we learn that the duties of our secular callings need not lead us away from our religious duties, be we only diligent and industrious in them. Like our Lord Himself, who worked with his foster-father, St. Joseph; like St. Paul, who laboured at tent-making; and the Mother of our Lord, who was occupied in the care of her cottage, we may devote ourselves to the duties of religion, and be also serviceable to our fellow-men in the ordinary affairs of life. No man's calling, be it only honest and good, need lead him away from God. Opportunities for doing good, and for every good work, arise in all states of life and under every kind of circumstance. The man who works hard may exercise himself in prayer, meditation, reading God's Word, as well as disengage himself from earthly things. Thus religion may cheer the hours of labour, and contentment sanctify both.

St. Crispin is thus referred to in the Martyrology :

"At Soissons, in France, of the holy Martyrs, Crispin and Crispinian, noble Romans, who, in the persecution of Dioclesian, under Rictiovarus, President, after most cruel torments, killed with a sword, obtained the crown of martyrdom, whose bodies were afterwards transported to Rome, and honourably interred in the Church of St. Laurence, in Palisparva."



*ALL SOULS ; or, The Commemoration of all the Faithful
Departed. Nov. 2nd.*

But quickened by the Spirit ; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison ; which sometime were disobedient. —1 PETER iii. 18—20.

CATHOLIC writers give us to understand that the Church of Christ consists of three parts : 1st, the triumphant Church in heaven ; 2nd, the Church militant on earth ; and 3rd, the Church waiting in Hades : and that our charity includes all the members of Christ, in whatever place they are.

By virtue of the Communion of Saints which we profess in the Creed, there is also a certain communication and intercourse between all the members of the mystical body of Christ, which nothing short of absolute removal from it can ever break or dissolve. This union we maintain with the blessed in heaven by thanking and praising God for their triumph, knowing assuredly that they continue to pray and intercede for us, as they used to do while they were on earth. With those who belong to the Church

militant on earth we have communion in all good things, in prayers, sacraments, and in works of mercy and charity. We also maintain our oneness with the Church waiting in Hades, by soliciting God's mercy and favour on their behalf.

Previous to the Ascension of the Saviour it is certain, from our Lord's words, that no one had ever entered heaven. "No man," said Jesus Christ, "hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."¹ Where then, we may ask, has been the dwelling of these holy men of old, the patriarchs of the Old Testament, of Moses and Elias, and of the Saints of the New Testament, in the interval between their departure from earth and their resurrection from the dead? Not in hell; for there is no redemption from that awful state. Not in heaven; for no man, said our Lord, had ever entered there before His Ascension.

* [The ancient belief of Jews and Gentiles, that there is an intermediate state of the dead, receives confirmation from the parable of Dives and Lazarus; from the prayer of the repentant thief upon the Cross; and from the passage in the text.

This ancient belief of the Jews is found in the second Book of the Maccabees, where we read: "And when he" (*i.e.* Judas) "had made a gathering throughout the company, to the sum of two thousand drachms of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem to

* The part in brackets may be omitted, if the homily is thought too long.

offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection : for, if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. . . . Wherefore he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin.”²

On this subject Bp. Taylor says : “ We find in the history of the Maccabees, that the Jews did pray and make offerings for the dead (which appears by other testimonies, and by their form of prayers still extant, which they used in the captivity). It is very considerable, that since our Blessed Saviour did reprove all the evil doctrines and traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, and did argue concerning the dead and the resurrection against the Sadducees, yet he spake no word against this public practice, but left it as he found it, which he who came to declare to us all the will of his Father, would not have done, if it had not been innocent, pious, and full of charity.”³]

In the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the beggar after death is not found reposing on the breast of an angel in heaven. He is on the bosom of Abraham, who had not yet entered there. But he is so near the lost that, notwithstanding the gulf between them, they can hold converse with one another. In this middle state Dives was in torments, but Lazarus was in joy, in Paradise, whither the Saviour descended when He died, telling the dying thief on the Cross, “ To-day shalt thou be *with me* in Paradise.”⁴

But this Paradise was not heaven. For neither there, nor three days later, did Jesus ascend into heaven. He told Mary Magdalen, after His return to earth some days after, "I am not yet ascended to my Father." And Paradise was not hell, for there they are in torments.

But St. Peter, in the text of this homily, tells us where Paradise is.

He says, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

What can there be more fitting the office of the divine Redeemer than that the Son of God, descending into hell, should clothe Himself with the spoils of the arch-enemy, viz., with the souls of men whom Satan had deceived, but whose liberation from prison and bondage He had already purchased by His death?

We know that at His death "The graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."⁵ Can we conceive that the presence of Jesus in the place of the departed brought no joy or happiness to the captives, whose redemption He had just bought? Rather His august presence filled them with joy. Freedom was theirs, and that supreme

happiness which consists in the presence of God. Here was the fulfilment of Hosea's prophecy, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."⁶ Here Zechariah received the fulfilment of his words, "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee."⁷ And, again, by the Apostle's words, "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."⁸ By these words are expressed the results of that triumphant descent into hell.

¶. *Fidelium animae per misericordium Dei requiescant in pace.*

Ry. Amen.

NOTES.

¹ St. John iii. 13.

² 2 Macc. xii. 43—45.

³ *The Liberty of Prophecy*, lib. i., sec. 20; and further, where he speaks of prayers for the dead as "*the universal practice of the Church of God in all places and in all ages*," etc.

⁴ St. Luke xxiii. 43.

⁵ St. Luke xxiii. 52—53.

⁶ Ch. xiii. 14.

⁷ Ch. ix. 11, 12.

⁸ Colos. ii. 15.



ALL SOULS. (Homily II.)

The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus. . . . The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.—2 TIM. i. 16—18.

TO those who may assert that the prayer of St. Paul in the text, on behalf of his deceased friend Onesiphorus, is no prayer for the dead, we can only recommend a more complete study of the original Greek words of the text.

[Bp. Taylor remarks on this text, "Although it is probable that Onesiphorus at that time was dead (because in his salutations he salutes his household, without naming him who was the *major domo*, against his custom of salutations in other places), yet besides this, the prayer was for such a blessing to him whose demonstration and reception could not be but after death, which implies clearly that then there is a need of mercy, and by consequence the dead people even to the Day of Judgment inclusively are the subjects of a misery, the objects of God's mercy and therefore fit to be commemorated in the duties of our piety and charity, and that we are to recommend their condition to God, not only to give them more glory in the re-

union, but to pity them to such purposes in which they need for it being certain how great their need is, it may concern the prudence of charity to be the more earnest, as not knowing the greatness of their necessity.”^{1]}

It is much more than probable, we might almost say that it is absolutely certain, that Onesiphorus, who had often ministered to the Apostle’s wants, was now dead. And we may be quite certain that the prayer of our text may serve as a model for all prayers for the departed.

Not only do we find the Jews of old and of the present time praying for the dead, but the same custom (as Bp. Taylor tells us) has been practised in every age of the Church. There are no express commands in holy Scripture to do so: the practice rests on the fundamental doctrine of the Communion of Saints, which we profess every time we recite the Apostles’ Creed.

The practice of the whole of Christendom will be a sufficient guide for the devout Christian Churchman, and will serve to convince him that this custom, so ancient and universally followed, cannot be otherwise than useful to those who have gone before and departed this life in the faith and love of the Redeemer. In all the ancient Liturgies are found the prayers which those who have gone before us have used. “Let us pray for those who are departed in peace,” says one of the Apostolic Constitutions.² “We offer on one day every year,” says Tertullian, “oblations for

the dead as birthday honours.”³ St. Cyprian says, in his first Epistle, of persons who appointed clergymen to be their guardians or executors, that if they did so, “no offering was to be made for him, nor sacrifice on his falling asleep.” And again, “It is one thing,” he says, “to stand for pardon, another to arrive at glory ; one thing, being cast into prison, not to go out thence, till one has paid the last farthing, another to receive at once the reward of faith and courage : one thing, being tortured by long anguish for sins, to be long cleansed, and purged by fire, another to have purged all sins by suffering : lastly, one thing to wait in suspense to the Day of Judgment for the sentence of the Lord, another to be at once crowned by the Lord.”⁴ St. Chrysostom speaks of one of the obligations of the priesthood “that he is the intercessor to God for the sins of the living and the dead :”⁵ and again, “Nor in vain do we make mention of the departed in the course of the divine Mysteries, and approach God in their behalf, beseeching the Lamb, who is before us, who taketh away the sins of the world ; not in vain, but that some refreshment may thereby ensue to them. Nor in vain doth he that standeth by the altar cry out, when the tremendous Mysteries are being celebrated, “For all that have fallen asleep in Christ, and for those who perform commemorations in their behalf,” for if there were no commemorations for them, these things would not have been spoken : since our service is not mere scenery. God forbid ! Yea, it is by ordinance of the

Spirit that these things are done. Let us then give them aid, and perform commemoration for them. For if the children of Job were purged by the sacrifice of their father ; why dost thou doubt that when we, too, offer for the departed, some consolation arises to them ? Since God is wont to grant the petitions of those who ask for others. . . . Let us not then be weary in giving aid to the departed, and of offering prayers for them : for the common expiation of the world is even before us.”⁶

It is useless to multiply these instances, which are everywhere found in the writings of the Fathers.

We need only refer to that tender passage in the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, in which his mother Monica,⁷ on his death-bed, begged the sacrifices and prayers of the Church after her departure ; as well as to the inscriptions in the catacombs at Rome, in which peace, rest and benediction are most beautifully prayed for, on the soul of the deceased Christian over whose sepulchre it was placed. “Mayest thou rest in peace, O Exuperius ! who lived xxiii. years, iii. months and vi. days.”⁸ This was found in the cemetery of Callistus.

Here is another ; “To Lucifera, the sweetest wife ; as she left all sweetness with the greatest mourning to her husband, she has merited a monument. Let each one of the brethren who shall read the inscription, beseech God that the holy and innocent soul may be taken to God.”

Thus has it come to pass that in all ages Christians

have prayed for their friends who have departed in the fear of God. It is a practice altogether distinct from the belief in purgatory, and is recommended by most illustrious examples in the Church of God. St. Odilo, Abbot of Cluni, A.D. 998, instituted the 1st of November as the day on which the commemoration was made; and the Council of Oxford, in 1222, made the day a holy day of the second class.

The dead seem to appeal to us from their silent resting places, in the words of holy Job of old: "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me."⁹

℣. Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine.

℞. Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

℣. Requiescant in pace.

℞. Amen.

NOTES.

¹ *Liberty of Prophesying*, i. 20.

² B. viii. 13.

³ *De Corona*, c. 3.

⁴ Epistle 55.

⁵ *De Sacerdot*, Lib. vi.

⁶ Hom. 41 in 1. Cor. xv. 35—36.

⁷ *Conf.* Lib. ix. ch. 13, "*Orat pro matre defunctâ.*"

⁸ v. Dr. Rock's *Hierurgia*.

⁹ Job xix. 21.



LEONARD, AB. C.

Nov. 6th.

Sell that ye have, and give alms ; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth.—ST. LUKE xii. 33.

ST. LEONARD was a French nobleman in the court of Clovis I. and was converted to the faith of Christ by St. Remigius, whose constant attendant he became.

After preaching the faith some time he retired to the monastery of Micy, near the city of Orleans ; and subsequently leaving this, went into a hermitage in the forest of Limoges. Here he built himself an oratory and lived a life of much austerity ; insomuch that a monastery arose on the spot, endowed by the King with a great part of the surrounding forest, and presided over by the Saint himself.

Before his retirement to Micy the Saint had been most remarkable for his charity towards captives and prisoners : and this becoming known, King Clovis granted him the privilege of loosing whom he would. He therefore became the patron of prisoners. He died A.D. 599, and his name became famous in France and England.

Hom. LXV.

St. Leonard is an example of the serviceable nature of solitude.

The practice of retirement from the world is at all times useful to the Christian ; as appears from the example of the prophets and devout men of the Old Law, as well as from Christ and His followers under the New. When Isaac of old would meditate, he would go out into the field : when Moses met God, it was in the desert : when Jesus was about to begin His ministry, He retired into the desert about the Jordan : after Paul's conversion he retired for a while into Arabia. So does solitude help to compose and settle the thoughts ; the mind increases in vigour ; and thus is fit to reflect on its wants, to contemplate the mysteries of divine love, and the grounds of its hope.

He is thus commemorated :

“ At Limoges, in Aquitaine, of St. Leonard, Confessor, Disciple of St. Remigius, Bishop, who being nobly born, and making choice of a solitary life, was famous for holiness and miracles, especially in delivering captives.”

¶. And in other places, of many other Martyrs, and Confessors, and holy Virgins.

Ry. Thanks be to God.





MARTIN, B. C.

Nov. 11th.

Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.—ST. MATTH. xxv. 23.

THE name of St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, has descended to posterity, famous for acts of charity.

The son of a Roman military tribune, he was born in Hungary about A.D. 316, and was educated at Pavia, in Italy. While only ten years old he became a catechumen; and at the age of fifteen was compelled by an imperial order to enter the army. It was during his military career that the well-known story of his dividing his soldier's cloak with a beggar had its origin. It is related that during one very severe winter, while many were perishing with cold, St. Martin, at the head of his soldiers, met at the gate of the city of Amiens, a poor man almost naked, who was trembling and shaking with cold, and begging for alms. St. Martin seeing that no one took notice of his wants, was moved with pity; and being reduced by his charities to his arms and the clothes he wore, he drew his sword, cut his cloak in two pieces, giving one to the beggar and enveloping himself in the other.

Hom. LXVI.

For the sorry figure which the soldier made in his mutilated cloak, he received much ridicule from the by-standers. But next night in his sleep, St. Martin saw his Lord standing by him, dressed in the half of the cloak which he had given away ; and asking him whether he could recognise it again. Then he heard Jesus say to the angels which surrounded him : "Martin, yet a catechumen, has clothed Me with this garment." ¹

In consequence of this vision, St. Martin determined to receive Holy Baptism. He was then eighteen years old, and spent two years after this in the army, which he then quitted in order to devote himself to solitary study. Visiting St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, A.D. 353—4, he was induced to take upon himself the minor order of Exorcist ; declining to accede to the Saint's wish of ordaining him Deacon. While he was on a journey across the Alps to visit his parents, he was attacked by robbers ; who, threatening his life, were so confounded by the Christian modesty and courage of the Saint, that the one who had been about to murder him became a Christian, and himself related the circumstance. In Hungary, St. Martin turned his mother and many of his countrymen to the faith.

In Illyricum St. Martin met with his first persecution for the faith. There he opposed the Arian heresy, which had been suffered to prevail without opposition ; and exciting the anger of that sect, he was publicly scourged and banished the country. Hearing then

that his friend, St. Hilary, had been driven² from his see by those heretics, St. Martin chose to go into solitude at Milan.

Four years afterwards, finding St. Hilary restored to his see, he went to Rome to meet him on his way ; and overtaking him, went with him to Poitiers. It was near this city that he built his monastery, the first ever erected in Gaul. His fame increasing, he was elected Bishop of Tours ;³ and consecrated July 3rd, A.D. 371. St. Martin, however, continued to live a hermit's life ; and his monastery became the famous abbey of Marmoutier, the most ancient in France, now belonging to the congregation of St. Maur.

St. Martin died on the 8th of November, A.D., 397, seven months after St. Ambrose, and was buried at Cande, in the diocese of Tours. The feast of his ordination and the translation of his relics is kept on the 4th of July : and formerly the *Relatio*, or bringing them back from Auxerre to Tours was observed on the 13th of December. The cope⁴ which he wore used to be carried into battle, and kept in a tent where the Divine Mysteries were celebrated. Numbers of Churches in England and France are dedicated in his honour.

His day is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

“At Tours, in France, the birthday of St. Martin, Bishop and Confessor, whose life was so renowned for miracles, that he was made worthy to be the raiser of three dead men to life.”

NOTES.

¹ St. Matth. xxv. 40.

² A.D. 356.

³ This see is said to have been founded by St. Gratian, A.D. 250. He governed the diocese for fifty years, and was succeeded by St. Litorius.

⁴ Hence the word "Chapel" (*Capella*), derived from *Cappa*, a cope, is used of places of worship other than parish Churches.





BRITIUS, B.

Nov. 13th.

And in a sore conflict she gave him the victory : that he might know that godliness is stronger than all.—WISDOM OF SOLOMON x. 12.



T. BRITIUS, or Brice, is an example of the power which the grace of God has to work in the hearts of men.

A native of Tours, and a man of humble birth, he was educated in the monastery of Marmoutier, under the care of St. Martin ; but gave great offence to the Saint and his brethren by his levity and irregular life.

Notwithstanding the rebukes which St. Martin administered to him he refused to repent ; and revenged himself on the Saint by slandering his character. St. Martin, however, always predicted that he would repent ; and at last the event justified the prediction. Britius repented of his sins, and was ordained Deacon and Priest by St. Martin ; and subsequently consecrated to be his successor (A.D. 339). His tenure of the see was not by any means happy ; for God was pleased to visit him with the accusations of calumny. Though he led a pure and holy life, giving himself

Hom. LXVII.

over to prayer and devout meditation, he was charged in the year 430 with a violation of the virtue of chastity, and was obliged to leave Tours. Retiring in exile to Rome, he appealed to Cœlestine, the Bishop, who pronounced him innocent. By the exercise of patience he triumphed over the malice of his enemies; and on the death of his successor he was sent back to Tours by Sixtus III. and restored to his see. Britius lived for seven years after his restoration; and in A.D. 444 fell asleep in the Lord. His body was laid near St. Martin in a chapel which he had built.

In Christian art St. Britius is represented as a Bishop with a child in his arms, and with burning coals in his hands. He was the first man who underwent this ordeal; and is said to have successfully proved his innocence by its means.

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”





MACHUTUS, B.

Nov. 15th.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.—ST. MATTH. v. 11, 12.



ALL true followers of Jesus Christ have said in their generation what their Master said in His. It has always been that the world has hated Christ's followers, reviled them, cast out their name as evil, scoffed at them, imprisoned and even tortured them while they were living ; but after their removal hence, its mind has changed, and it has grieved and mourned their loss. But they are then safe from harm ; where none can reach them, or ask their forgiveness. This was the case with St. Machutus. The name of this Saint is variously given as Maclou, Malo, Mawes or Macutus ; but it is known that he was born in Glamorganshire, in Wales, where his father was of considerable rank. He was baptized and brought up in the Christian faith by St. Brendan, a native of Ireland, who was Abbot of a monastery in the place where Machutus was born. Being

Hom. LXVIII.

ordained Priest he was soon elected by the people to a Bishopric, but preferred to retire into Brittany, where he put himself under the care of a recluse named Aaron, near Aleth. After a time he was sent on a mission to the pagans, who lived in the neighbouring parts; and fulfilled his duty with such unwearied zeal, that he was elected Bishop of Aleth A.D. 541.

It was in this see that his virtues stirred up so much jealousy that he was thrust out of it.

He accordingly took with him seven devout men whom he had chosen for his companions; and retired to Saintes in Aquitania, where they were received by St. Leontius, the Archbishop, with great kindness. The Saint's prayers for his rebellious people were heard, and he was restored to his see; but while on his way to visit St. Leontius, he was seized with illness, and calmly died, A.D. 564.

The city of Malo was named after him; and became an episcopal see.





HUGH, B.

Nov. 17.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.—NUMB. xxiii. 10.

ST. HUGH was born of a good family in Burgundy in the year 1140; lost his mother before he was eight years old, and was educated at a house of regular Canons, near his father's Castle.

At the early age of nineteen he was admitted to the Order of Deacons; and subsequently becoming Priest, he was made Pro-curator of the Carthusian monastery, in which he had spent the ten previous years of his life. In the year 1181 King Henry II. founded the first Carthusian monastery in England, at Witham in Somersetshire; and begged so earnestly for Hugh's appointment thereto that the Saint was compelled to accept the government of that foundation. Here working with his own hands at the erection of the monastery, he gained the hearts of his most savage opponents by his meekness, gentleness, and sagacity; and speedily ensured the prosperity of the monastery.

Increasing in the King's confidence, in the year 1186 the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln assembled

Hom. LXIX.

to elect a Bishop ; and the choice falling on St. Hugh, he was consecrated on the 21st Sept. In the see of Lincoln he became the father of the poor, defending them often from the rigour of the Norman forest-laws ; and completed the building of the Cathedral which had been begun in 1086 by S. Remigius. In the year 1191, during the reign of Richard I., St. Hugh made a visitation of all the monasteries in his diocese ; and continued unwearied in the duties of his episcopal office. It was his constant practice to retire every year to Witham for a few days. But while he was on his way to assist at a national council, he was seized with illness at London, A.D. 1200. On the 17th of November, finding himself worse, he called for his monks and clergy, and desired them to bury his body at Lincoln. Ordering the floor to be swept and covered with ashes in the form of a Cross, he told them to lay him there ; and while the office of Compline was being sung, when they reached the Cantic "Nunc dimittis," he calmly expired in the sixtieth year of his age and the fifteenth of his episcopate.

His body was laid in the Cathedral of Lincoln ; and in 1222 it was translated to a more honourable place at the back of the high altar.

He is thus mentioned in the Martyrology :

"In England, of St. Hugh, Bishop, who of a charter-house monk, being ordained Bishop of Lincoln, renowned for many miracles, made a holy end."



EDMUND, K. M.

Nov. 20th.

Thy testimonies have I claimed as mine heritage for ever : and why ? they are the very joy of my heart.—PSALM cxix. III.

ST. EDMUND, King of the East Angles, was born in the year 841, and ascended the throne at the early age of fourteen. He was crowned on Christmas Day, 855, by Humbert, Bishop of Helmham, who became his adviser. A pious and peace-loving prince, his chief care was for God and His glory. He occupied himself in the restoration of the Churches and monasteries, spending a whole year of his life in retirement at Hunstanton, in Norfolk, to learn the Psalter by heart. The peace and happiness of his people were equally his concern, endeavouring to establish them by the impartial administration of justice, and by the religious regulations of his dominions.

He was visited, however, in the fifteenth year of his reign by the Danes, who ravaged his dominions, and destroyed and robbed Churches, monasteries, and abbeys. The abbeys of Croyland, Ely, Huntingdon, Peterborough, and Thorney, with many others, were

Hom. LXX.

completely devastated ; and priests and religious persons were massacred. Pouring down upon Thetford they gave battle to St. Edmund and his forces ; and though neither side was victorious, the good King out of very clemency was unwilling to pursue the war, but fled to the castle at Framlingham. Pursued to a Church at Hoxne, on the Wavenley, where he was found in prayer, the Danes dragged him out, tied him to a tree and beat him cruelly with whips. Bearing this indignity with calmness and meekness, these barbarians then made him a mark for their arrows and darts. Then cutting off his head, the Saint completed his martyrdom, calling, like Stephen, on the name of Jesus, 20th November, A.D. 870, and in the twenty-ninth year of his age. His faithful Bishop Humbert shared the glory of his death. In the year 923, the relics of St. Edmund were translated to Bedericsworth ; whose name, in honour of the King, was changed to Edmundsbury, or Bury St. Edmunds.¹ Here a Church was built after the fashion of the times in his honour, over the place of his interment. Trunks of trees were sawn lengthways down the middle, reared up with one end in the ground, and the rough side outermost. These trunks cut of equal height, set up close to one another, and with the spaces between filled up with mud and mortar, formed the walls ; upon which a thatched roof was raised. Such were the homes of Christianity in this our land, as at Glastonbury and Bury St. Edmunds, till wealthier

¹ Bury, signifying a Court or Palace.

times brought material for the rich abbeys, which were once the glory of our country. It was not until the year 1020 that the abbey of St. Edmund-the-King was built of stone. The honour in which St. Edmund the King was held is shewn by the fifty-five Churches which were dedicated in his name, throughout Norfolk and Suffolk.

It has been well said, that St. Edmund's whole life was "a preparation for martyrdom."





CECILIA, V. M.

Nov. 22nd.

Praise him in the cymbals and dances : praise him upon the strings and pipe.—Ps. cl. 4.

ST. CECILIA, the patroness of Church music, has been honoured by the whole Church from the earliest times. She is mentioned together with Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes and Anastasia, in the Canon of the Mass of the Roman Church. She was a native of Rome, of good family ; and instructed from her youth in the principles of the Christian religion. In her youth she consecrated herself to God's service ; but was compelled by her parents to marry a nobleman named Valerian, whom, with his brother Tiberinus, she converted to the faith.

After living with her husband as a sister, she suffered martyrdom with him under Alexander Severus ; probably in A.D. 230. She was buried in that portion of the catacomb of Callixtus which bears her name.

A Church was dedicated in her name at Rome in the sixth century ; and this having fallen into decay was rebuilt by Pope Pascal I. early in the ninth

Hom. LXXI.

century. Hither the bodies of St. Cecilia and her companions were translated, and laid under the high altar, A.D. 821. In A.D. 1559 Cardinal Sfrondati, nephew to Pope Gregory XIV., rebuilt and adorned the Church in a most sumptuous manner; and caused the relics of these Saints to be deposited in a most richly decorated vault, called "The Confession of St. Cecilia," in the presence of Pope Clement VIII., and the College of Cardinals. The body of the Saint was found, lying on the right side, clothed in a robe of gold tissue, with linen cloths at her feet, tinged with her blood, as Pope Pascal I. had left them.

The life of St. Cecilia teaches us to consecrate music to the service of God.

The greatest of God's Saints have found comfort in hearing and singing God's praises: by the exercise of this holy joy we excite ourselves to devotion and the praise of God, and we accompany our devotion with words and signs expressive of the feeling of our hearts. St. Augustine teaches us that music is useful in moving the mind devoutly, and in kindling the affections of divine love. The same Saint, in his *Confessions*,¹ says, that when he was but lately converted to God he was so moved by the sacred singing at Church, that he was moved to shed abundance of sweet tears.

St. Cecilia is thus mentioned in the Martyrology:

"At Rome, of St. Cecily, Virgin and Martyr, by whose counsel and exhortation Valerian, her spouse, and his brother Tiburtius, came to believe in Christ,

¹ *Conf.* ix. 6—10.

and for the same suffered martyrdom : after whose death Almachius, Governor of the city, caused her to be apprehended, and after she had gloriously overcome the torment of fire, to be beheaded in the time of Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander, Emperor."





CLEMENT, B. M.

Nov. 23.

With Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.—PHIL. iv. 3.

ST. CLEMENT was a Jew who was converted to Christianity by the Apostles' teaching. He was the constant companion of St. Paul; as he was in this case, when the Apostle was writing to the Church of that city, A.D. 62.

He was thus acquainted with the members of the Apostolic College; and is mentioned by Rufinus as being "almost an Apostle." In A.D. 91, on the death of St. Cletus,¹ the Pope, St. Clement was consecrated his successor. He held the see for nine years, eleven months, and twenty days.

During his pontificate a schism was made in the Church at Corinth, during which many fell away from the faith. Accordingly, in A.D. 96, St. Clement wrote two admirable Epistles still extant, in which he exhorted them all to unity, peace and humility.

In the year 100 St. Clement was called to his rest; and is thus described in the Martyrology:

"The birthday of St. Clement, Pope, who in the

third place after St. Peter the Apostle, held the see of Rome, and in the persecution of Trajan banished into Chersonesus, and there thrown into the sea with an anchor² tied to his neck, was crowned with martyrdom; whose body, under Pope Nicholas the First, being brought to Rome, was honourably placed in a Church built before in his honour."

A Church in Rome was dedicated to his memory in the fourth century; this was the building in which Zozimus condemned Coelestius, the Pelagian, in the fifth century.

St. Clement constantly teaches that the spirit of Christianity is one of disentanglement from the things of this world. His name was "in the book of life." "We must," he says, "look upon the things of this world as none of ours, and not desire them. This world and that to come are two enemies; we cannot therefore be friends to both: but must resolve which we will forsake, and which we will enjoy."

NOTES.

¹ The predecessors of St. Clement in the Apostolic Chair were, after the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul, 1st, St. Linus, 2nd, (eleven years after) St. Cletus; then in A.D. 91, St. Clement.

² Hence the boys on the foundation of St. Clement Danes Church, London, have an anchor on their buttons.



CATHARINE, V. M.

Nov. 25th.

Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.—

ST. MATTH. v. 8.

ST. CATHARINE was a noble lady of Alexandria, famed for her wealth and learning ; who confuted a body of heathen philosophers sent by Maximinus II. to reason with her.

Being converted by her wisdom and reasoning to the faith, they all suffered martyrdom by being burnt together in one fire. At length, after suffering many revolting trials from the tyrant, she was ordered to be tortured by being fixed to an engine, consisting of four wheels armed with short spikes and swords ; which, by turning different ways, were to tear her to pieces. No sooner, however, was the Saint fixed to this terrible engine than it was broken to pieces by an unseen hand ; and the Saint finished her martyrdom with the sword. A.D. 307.

The well-known Catharine-wheel is the emblem of her martyrdom, and is still found among us : while representations of St. Catharine, crowned, and with her wheel, are often met with in our Churches.

Hom. LXXIII.

Her body was discovered in the eighth century by the Christians in Egypt, and translated to the great monastery of Mount Sinai, in Arabia, which had been richly endowed by Justinian, the Emperor. It is not often that God is pleased to make use of the wise, or learned of this world, to confound the subtleties of the heathen ; but St. Catharine was of royal descent and of considerable attainments. She is therefore honoured as the patroness of colleges, learning, theology and education. By ladies of rank also, on account of her royal birth, she is regarded as their patroness.

St. Catharine is thus described in the Western Martyrology :

“The birthday of St. Catharine, Virgin and Martyr, who for confession of the Christian faith, being first cast into prison at Alexandria, under Maximinus, Emperor, and afterwards for a long time beaten with whips called *scorpions*, at length beheaded, accomplished her martyrdom : whose holy body being miraculously carried by angels¹ unto Mount Sinai, is there honoured with great reverence, through the frequent concourse of Christians.”

Glory be to God, for ever and ever. Amen.

¹ Probably only monks.

